

# LONDON SOCIETY.

MAY, 1869.

SKETCHES FROM OUR OFFICE WINDOW.

*Shopping and Visiting.*



'I had much rather, I protest, watch graceful figures from the office window.'

**T**HERE is a time in the day which has a peculiar importance and solidarity of its own, which is the very heart of its heart, the very morning of its morning—a time which I should put as the hours

between twelve and three. Depend upon it, all the most important business of the world is done very much about this time. Letters are by that time answered, interruptions attended to, routine business trans-

acted, and a man settles down into what most requires his thoughts and energies for the time. But it is just at this time that carriages begin to permeate the four avenues of Piccadilly, and the *sanctum sanctorum* of the office is at times invaded. While sordid men are most deeply engaged in making filthy lucre, the heavenly beings are about to pursue their loftier destiny of making away with it. No, we had rather not give the benefit of our refined taste in accompanying them to Hunt and Roskell, or to Swan and Edgar, lest we should hear soft whispers about that love of a shawl, or that darling of a bracelet. We reject the proffer of a seat in the carriage to visit that simpering dowager who was so greatly struck by our portrait in the Academy, or even the young ladies who are quite in love with our pretty *vers de société*. But we walk to the office window just in time to catch a Parthian glance and a waving hand; and as the wheels roll away our attention and thoughts are recalled to some phases of London Society which belong to shopping and visiting.

It is after lunch that the real work of shopping commences. The mornings have been passed in domestic avocations, that is to say the newspapers have been glanced at, letters written, the dinner ordered, and, reinvigorated by lunch, the ladies are prepared to enter upon the flowery but dangerous paths of shopping. A certain difference is to be observed between those who shop early and those who shop late. If you have some really important purchases to make the shopping takes precedence over every other morning engagement. A young lady is going to be married, and the tremendous arrangements of the *trousseau* are to be effected; or some one is going out to India, and dozens upon dozens of everything are to be provided; or some large purchases are to be effected such as happen every now and then in a household. Now these are really business transactions of which the most business-like people must speak with respect. Ladies then require plenty of time

and ample attention and freedom from distraction. But the ordinary shopping of the season is not of this extraordinary kind. It is merely a pleasant occupation *pour passer le temps*—an amusing interlude that may fill up some space between lunching and visiting. It is attended with a pleasing amount of hazard and excitement perhaps not altogether remote to the enjoyment which coarser beings find in their betting-books. It is even pleasant to see the crowd and confusion—to feel how much of it is due to oneself—and exchange smiles, words, and glances with one's friends, and thus combine the duties and pleasures of society.

As I stand at my office window, frequently glancing down the vistas of the street, I am greatly amused at the extraordinary amount of lady traffic which goes on in and out of the shops within range of observation. It becomes a difficult matter to credit the general assertion of my lady friends, that they dislike shopping. From what I observe from my office window, I feel convinced that shopping is one of the most important transactions of a lady's life, but, I suspect, by no means generally done in a business-like way. It is lingered over and lengthened to twice the number of hours really necessary for it. It therefore strikes me, as a looker on, that shopping must afford ladies an extreme amount of pleasure and amusement, judging by the intensity of ardour which they bring to the pursuit. Moreover, I have more than once had the dubious felicity of being the escort, in the days of ignorance, to a lady during her whole morning's engagements, so I have some definite notions of what takes place at any large, handsome draper's establishment. The windows are decked out with every enticement to enter. Here are displayed splendid silks, dainty little bonnets, Parisian mantles, or cloaks, all suitable for the season, whether summer or winter, and many other equally bewitching articles of a lady's apparel. Mammies and elder daughters, or elder daughter accompanied by a governess or com-

panion as *chaperone*, are handed out by the liveried footmen and received by obsequious shopmen, bowing them to a seat by the counter. The carriage slowly moves off, either to wait an indefinite period, or with directions to call again in an hour or so. At any rate, scarcely a thought is cast to the weary coachman until the ladies have concluded their purchases, about which they frequently spend two or three hours, and sometimes a still longer time.

If I venture to remonstrate with my fair friends, and speak a little authoritatively on this apparent waste of time, I am told with benign contempt that shopping is a very important matter, requiring no end of tact, taste, judgment, and innumerable other qualities of a high moral and intellectual nature. And no doubt they are right; but having an ill-disposed mind, which sometimes revolts against the unsupported enunciation of dogmatic truth, I become sceptical, and ask for reasons. It shows no judgment, I argue in my ignorance, to be unable to choose a dress until every piece of silk or stuff has been exhibited over and over again, and at last the choice falls upon the first brought forward, or perhaps on none. But then those well-dressed, curly-headed, dandified young men are employed on purpose to angle gently with the ladies, and induce them to buy, and think no labour lost if they manage to put up a parcel at the end. Ladies are the best customers, and of course are best attended to, as, indeed, they should be everywhere. It no doubt amuses them to see all the pretty things; and as many of them leave papa to pay at the end of the year, they rarely deny themselves anything they fancy. It is only when the bill comes in, and dear papa looks dismayed and rather cross, that *mamas* and daughters trouble themselves as to whether certain articles were necessary, and then invariably come to the conclusion that not a thing has been purchased that could possibly have been done without. So papa settles the account, and the ladies return to their

favourite haunts, and are received with renewed politeness and attention. The parcels are as large as ever, the delights of shopping as attractive.

But besides the drapers' (granted to be the most important of all bazaars), there are other shops to be visited. It is instructive, however, to observe with what comparative contumely these are treated. Mamma looks at her watch, and declares it to be much later than she expected. It is very convenient that the grocer is a close neighbour of the much-favoured draper, and he receives the honour of a visit. This visit, however, is entirely on business. A few words, a few orders hastily given, and the lady generally declines to examine any of his commodities, which cannot be supposed to be pretty or attractive.

It is something sad, something humiliating, something like Alexander's toothache, which reminded him that he was mortal, to reflect that occasionally ethereal beings will condescend once in a way to do a little business with butcher or baker. But in this description of shopping ladies can carry brevity to the point of curtness. Only the reflection arises that *y* ladies can be expeditious, and can be brief, and can really say what they mean in the fewest possible words, why should they not carry the idea a little further, and illumine other paths and haunts of life with these truly refulgent principles? It is very different when a lady visits a jeweller, most happy when *bonâ fide* she has got a hundred-pound note to lay out on something pretty. Why, shopping makes us think of diamonds, and diamonds is a subject as exhaustless as it is brilliant. A romance, and even a tragedy, might be written on the subject of shopping at a jeweller's. Yet I question if, after all, the jeweller is the tradesman most destructive to marital peace. There is the dressmaker and the milliner, and that fearful 'she-thing,' who is dressmaker and milliner at once, a being who supplies both materials and workmanship, and whose bills the British husband never really knows during a

prolonged sojourn in this life. This is the kind of establishment where a Madame Mantalini is proprietress, and Miss Knaggs presides, and a pretty Kate Nickleby tries on the garment. The fashionable *modiste* has often a house full of pretty, graceful girls, whose grace and prettiness are not appreciated as they ought to be by their patrons; and, really, if they sold gloves and collars at this sort of place, a man might look on the institution of shopping with a more favourable eye. I must also admit, on behalf of shopping, what I think Sir Robert Peel has pointed out, that it has a very strong educational value. Many a boy and girl picks up a great deal of knowledge by peering into the shop windows; and the same may be said of any of us who will make the experiment of studying shop windows all the way from the Marble Arch to the City.

From her shopping the lady hurries to her carriage, in order to make her calls in the palaced west, whether of congratulation, condolence, or politeness. Considered *per se*, calls represent a very odd custom. To the unenlightened male mind they appear very frivolous; but there is a philosophy of common things, and the philosophy of calls is very deep indeed. Granting that they are productive of much that is enjoyable, there is also the abuse of the institution. The carriage has rolled away from the fashionable tradesman, and we will follow it in some morning calls. Most important of all is the lunching call. Shopping whets a lady's appetite, and she is quite prepared to enjoy an agreeable lunch and a pleasant chat with a few friends. Sometimes she has the good fortune to meet with new acquaintances whom she has long wished to know, or with strangers who turn out to be worth knowing. Englishmen can do nothing without eating and drinking, and even English ladies can do much better in the talking line at lunch-time. The calls have really done good. Mixing in society sharpens the intellect, awakens the conversational powers, and arouses a keen spirit of observation. These

are much needed by the great mass of ladies, who, but for visiting, would see very little of actual life, and are at all times rather inclined to narrow views of people and things. No blame is to be attached to them for this; it is owing to their education and seclusion, not from any physical or mental deficiency. They enjoy these little peeps into the outer world as much or even more than men, who have rather too much of it sometimes.

But we must glance at our friends whom we have left lunching. When the lunch is at an end, generally the visit ends too. The visitor remembers she has other places to go to, and takes her leave. Where there is no lunch to take up the time, and no other company than the caller and the lady called upon, to become sociable and confidential, these two friends have to introduce a third party into their conversation, and scandal becomes their dangerous amusement. With this resource time flies swiftly, and they part with regret and with many assurances that not a word of the private  *tête-à-tête*  shall ever be repeated. Every one knows the results of such a confab and such a compact. To make her last call, our lady of fashion drives into a narrow and gloomy street, and draws up at a dreary-looking house. Her arrival evidently makes a commotion within, but of the kind of commotion the intruder has no notion. This visit may be welcome or unwelcome, just as the visitor conducts herself. The lady of limited means becomes, no doubt, more than ever conscious of the little deficiencies in her drawing-room furniture and her own mean attire by the stolen peep at the noble carriage outside and the rich and handsome dress of her visitor. She often feels overwhelmed with a sense of her own littleness, and an exaggerated sense of the superiority of the woman of fortune and fashion. Fine feathers make fine birds, and it often is these alone which claim the superiority. If a true lady, the visitor can render her morning call a real pleasure to the visited, and leave behind her the favourable



impression that pride, hauteur, and condescension are not the necessary accompaniments to a carriage and pair. We will charitably hope that in paying such a call a woman of wealth will carefully avoid expressions of condolence with her poorer friend, accounts of her own happier fortune, allusions to painfully contrasting circumstances, noticing glances at everything in the room, or impertinent inquiries respecting her friend's household arrangements. Visits of advice unasked for, of inspection, which invariably show vulgar manners, of curiosity, which is intensely annoying, are never agreeable, especially to those whose circumstances are narrow. Yet, supposing the visit has been of the disagreeable kind, it still has sometimes what may be thought beneficial results. A carriage and pair with liveried servants at a small house in a humble street, exalt, in the eyes of all near neighbours, the inhabitants thus honoured. In their eyes, the people living at such a number are people of some standing in society from that day forward. And this is something to some people.

But ladies of wealth are not the only ladies who go shopping or visiting. All the customers at the grand shops do not arrive in their carriages. Many come on foot alone, or accompanied by their children. Some with limited purses, and some with none at all, having succeeded in obtaining credit by some unknown means. They enter the enticing shop with heavy, longing hearts, and leave it unsatisfied. A tender, honest mother purchases the article absolutely necessary, remembering many another scarcely less so for her little ones; but the sum in hand is expended, she dare not go beyond, and at once retires from the scene of temptation. Poor little Jack must still wear his threadbare frock, and Ellen her thin, but well-darned stockings. As for herself the mother desires no more. It is for her little ones she sighs. 'I must have a new bonnet,' murmurs a pretty girl; 'it is my only chance of success, and surely I shall be able to pay.' So

she enters, and first one thing and then another is presented to her view; and while she is about it she thinks she may as well get the things it is hard to do without. The temptation is strong, the list is lengthened, and the millstone is round her neck which weighs down health and spirits for many a long year. Once in debt it is rarely man or woman recover themselves.

Then our humbler friends have also their morning calls to pay. The wives of professional men have professional visits to make. In this way they share their husbands' burdens, and it is right they should do so. To neglect a call is frequently an act of self-indulgence, and always an act of incivility, especially to those who are equal in rank and position, and to inferiors it is a slight, and therefore an unkindness. There is a morality in visiting, a right and a wrong in all these social matters. It is much to be regretted that in these rounds of visits so little free and familiar intercourse is enjoyed. The stereotyped British morning call is susceptible of no end of improvement. There is very often nothing said approaching to conversation. A certain set of calling phrases seem almost to be transmitted from mother to daughter for generations, and are rigidly observed, till they become a weariness to flesh and spirit. If the ladies have patience to wade through these, and extend their visits beyond the necessary time for doing so, there may then be started some topic in which both take a little interest. The simple secret of true conversation is the taking an interest in what is said. Ladies often bring so much vanity and self-conceit with them in making a call, that they fail in awakening interest in each other. Each are anxious, after the first few phrases, to introduce themselves or their petty concerns into the foreground. The speaker is then interested, but frequently the listener is bored. They naturally fall back upon some quiet backbiting gossip, a constant fund for the woman of the world who is anxious that no hour may

come upon her in which she has nothing to say for herself.

I am afraid I may be thought to write ill-naturedly; but I am still more afraid that this unfavourable version may not altogether be incorrect. So, my dear womankind, you shall leave me to my office, and not entice me into the dissipation of shopping and visiting. As for the shops, I should indeed be a foolish fly if I accepted a spider-hearted invitation to walk into that description of parlour. It is enough for me if I discharge the painful duty of writing cheques, qualified by my prescriptive privilege of grumbling. Of course I have at times my own little private shopping to do, during which a clerk is qualified to say that I shall return within a few minutes. I order in fish and oysters, and, being a bit of a philosopher, not without a process of deliberate selection; and at the tailor's I am a known and, I trust, an appreciated customer; and I don't object to doing a little pleasant shopping in Covent Garden at a season of choice fruits; and at the poulterer's my judgment on snipe and woodcock is respected. Also I am free to admit that there are certain kinds of people on whom I am always ready to call. I don't care how often I have to call on dear Lady F——, the wisest, gentlest, most accomplished old lady in the grand world, who will entice me to talk myself, and in the most unaffected way will tell me all about that great world in which she has lived and where her reminiscences are historical. And Mrs. L—— is so pretty and engaging, and her children so charming, and the drawing-room so thoroughly perfect, that I could stay for hours watching her graceful ways and musical prattle, and that beautiful head whose interior, I am afraid, corresponds but poorly with its fair outward show. I might continue this category for a time, and yet I am afraid no catalogue is really

long of those ladies who are brilliant conversationalists either in silence or expression, and who throw off the life-giving ozone of a generous nature into the most conventional atmosphere. I like a lady with a speciality, whether travel, or art, or philanthropy; and I find that often in a very brief conversation they will give me their best and brightest thoughts, and send me away with the cheerful reflection that I have really done a good morning's work by my lounging visit. And, after all, calling is a great institution, not lightly to be spoken of; and though it is one of those things which 'no fellow can understand,' it is also one of those things which 'no fellow can do without.' They are the regular lines of approach by which English people proceed to sociality, intimacy, and friendship. A call is the prologue to a dinner and the epilogue to the feast. You may have intimacy and friendship under some novel set of circumstances; but it is the nature of the English to entrench themselves within the conventional lines of etiquette, and to look upon an intimacy which has not been graduated with calls and visits as something abnormal, irregular, and illicit. I confess to an honest British prejudice on the subject, and believe that after all a good deal is to be said in favour of the customary observances of society. Still there is a wonderful difference at the houses where you call, and I do not care to call anywhere where I am not *en rapport*. I know at times that the carriage will positively bear me away an unwilling captive to make some visit of state, because I shall offend people if I do not go; but I had much rather, I protest, watch graceful figures from the office window and guess their errand, unless, indeed, I slip away to bright faces which are brighter when I come!



## A VERY SINGULAR STORY.

MY name is Rachel Althea Tra-  
vera. It seems to me that in  
an account of this sort, it is better  
to state that at once, and then it  
avoids all worrying as to who that  
perpetually recurring 'I' may be.  
They are unfortunate initials, as  
you may perhaps observe, and have  
led to my being apostrophized as  
'Rat' by an impertinent younger  
brother, who is, I am thankful to  
say, generally at school. We, that  
is, my mother, my two sisters, and  
myself, live in Bryanston Square.  
We have no country house, and  
consequently are in town a great  
part of the year, when I, for one,  
would sooner be anywhere else; not  
that that melancholy fact has any-  
thing to do with my story, except  
so far as it accounts for our being  
in London one nasty day in Novem-  
ber, when something happened  
which was the remote cause of my  
writing this, the cause, in fact, of  
my having this to write. I had a  
headache. Now I don't mean to  
say I wrote this story because I had  
a headache; I think that, perhaps,  
would have been a reason for not  
writing it, but I will explain in a  
minute what my headache had to do  
with it. It was the 15th I think,  
and I was sitting in the drawing-  
room while my sister Agnes had her  
music lesson. I could speak Ger-  
man with tolerable fluency, having  
spent the last winter in Vienna with  
some friends, but Agnes hardly un-  
derstood a single word. Herr Blume  
could, however, speak a little Eng-  
lish, and they might in reality have  
got on very well, had it not been for  
the extreme excitability of the little  
man's temperament. In the event  
of a wrong chord, his conversation,  
though fluent, became totally in-  
comprehensible, and of such a  
striking nature that Agnes, who was  
very nervous, had once gone into  
violent hysterics, occasioned by  
agonising attempts to suppress her  
laughter. After that, my mother  
declared that I must always remain  
in the room to translate. It was a  
great bore being tied to one spot  
twice a week at exactly the same

hour, and I heartily wished Agnes  
would learn German herself. Les-  
sons had been talked of, but the  
idea had been given up.

'Rachel, dear, I don't think it's  
any use,' my mother had said to  
me; 'she hasn't the least talent for  
languages, and though the lessons  
may not be very expensive, yet you  
know, my dear child, all these  
things make a difference.'

Poor dear mamma! I made the  
sacrifice with a better grace, know-  
ing as I did how many of 'all those  
things' she would gladly have had,  
but denied herself for our sakes.

And so it came to pass that that  
15th of November found me at my  
usual post in a corner of the sofa,  
awaiting the arrival of Herr Blume.  
In he came, as the clock struck  
eleven, in the midst of a frantic  
rush on poor Agnes's part through  
an immense pile of music to find  
her piece. I think that put him  
out, for he stood watching her with  
an unnatural calmness, which I felt  
sure could only be the effect of  
almost superhuman efforts of self-  
control. He was a short, bay-  
coloured man, with spectacles, ex-  
traordinarily round eyes, and an  
immense quantity of distracted-  
looking hair, through which he was  
constantly running his fingers in a  
manner quite peculiar to himself.  
At last the piece was found, Agnes  
began to play, and I established  
myself more snugly in my corner.  
Alas! the peace which followed was  
but of short duration. A series of  
small disturbances began, the im-  
mediate cause of which was the  
piano: now the piano was a hired  
one, and not particularly good.  
Under a successful course of our  
treatment it had arrived at a blissful  
state of indifference concerning the  
pedal, keeping up a perpetual  
rumble which sounded like mild  
thunder; this little peculiarity ap-  
peared to have a most irritating  
effect on the unfortunate music  
master, and once or twice he had  
given vent to his feelings by a vi-  
olent castigation of the wretched in-  
strument. This, however, as one

may imagine, only tended to increase the evil, and matters had arrived at a crisis, when this morning my mother entered the room, as he was engaged in inflicting upon us a succession of tremendous minor crashes that were truly terrible.

With a bound which would not have disgraced Leotard, he leaped from the music stool and stood before her. After the usual compliments, he asked if it might be allowed to him 'to make to madame one small representation?'

This little inquiry was accompanied by a smile intended to be insinuating, but which was simply sardonic.

My mother of course assured him that she would be most happy to listen to any suggestion; upon which he declared, running his fingers through his hair, that, though it inflicted upon him much sorrow, he felt it to be his duty to instruct her that the pedal was much disordered, and was very noxious to him. 'For myself,' he proceeded, with a grand heroism, 'for myself I care not a little bit, but for these young messes'—here he indicated with a theatrical flourish Agnes and myself—'it is a fatal story.'

'It is only a hired piano, Herr Blume,' said my mother, 'and I think I really must change it; I know it is very bad.'

'Ach!' he said, eagerly, 'why does not one have her own splendid instrument? Madame will perhaps reflect this what I have said.'

He then suddenly closed his lips, and with a pirouette and another bound seated himself again, commencing on the spot such an illustration of that little weakness on the part of the pedal of which he had spoken, that my poor mother fled the room. I remained, sorely against my will, but tried to find consolation in a pile of cushions. My head ached, I could not read, and I sat listlessly turning over a photograph book, until I suppose I must have gone off into a doze. I was suddenly roused by Herr Blume's voice, raised to a positive shriek: 'Langsamer!—lang-samer, lang-samer-r!' I got up, and rushed to-

wards the piano; poor Agnes was as white as a sheet, and on Herr Blume's forehead stood great drops of perspiration.

'Slower, Agnes, slower; that is what Herr Blume means,' I said. Poor child, she made one more effort, but her fingers trembled so that she could hardly strike a note, and the next moment she burst into tears.

There was nothing more to be done that morning by either of them, I plainly saw; as for him he had been in a vile temper from the beginning.

'I am really very sorry, Herr Blume,' I said, as the door closed after her; 'it was entirely my fault for not attending: you know my sister hardly understands a word of German.'

'That, my fräulein, I know,' he answered, with awful solemnity, 'and I must, I fear, abandon her, if she cannot learn a little.'

To be abandoned by him he seemed to think the most dreadful fate in life.

'My temper,' he continued, with excitement, 'suffers, yes, suffers, through these trials.'

He never had any to speak of, but I didn't tell him so, thinking he mightn't perhaps like it. For a few minutes we both remained silent, he standing in a Napoleonic attitude, with folded arms, and knitted brows, glaring in a malignant manner at a cross in the carpet. I began nervously to consider whether it could possibly be that, owing to a strong anti-ritualistic feeling, our carpet might be displeasing to his eye. My apprehensions were, however, relieved when he proceeded to unfold his plans. There was, it seemed, a German lady of his acquaintance lodging in a street close by, who was anxious to give lessons: he could recommend her highly for her ability and accent, he added, and if my mother would permit Agnes to have a few lessons, he was sure her music would greatly benefit. Might he ask the lady to call on madame? he inquired; and so the end of it was, that it was arranged for her to come the next day at eleven o'clock.

'Of course you will manage it all, Rachel,' my mother said in the evening. 'I daresay she can't speak a word of English.'

So she came. As I look back at it now, the whole thing seems so odd, as if all that followed were the consequence of a little headache on my part, and a little temper on Herr Blume's; all the merest chance; and yet it cannot be: we are all working out some vast design, subservient to one great master will: generally, upon tiniest threads of trifles hang the great joys and miseries of life.

A little after eleven the next morning a card was brought up, on which was written 'Fräulein Dorn,' and in a minute she was in the room. She was not the least like what I had expected. Most people form some idea as to any one they are going to meet, and I had formed mine; but I was entirely wrong: there was not a trace of that dowdiness of dress and manner of which I had seen so much in the Vaterland, even in the classes to which, I knew, by her name, she did not belong. On the contrary, everything about her was fresh and graceful, and there was a charming ease and grave courtesy in her manner which astonished me. Her face, even now that I know it under its many changes, is difficult to describe. *Clear* was the only word that came into my mind as I looked at her. A sweet oval face, clear and pale, with dark hazel eyes, somewhat round and deep set, looking out fearlessly, like shining stars. Her lips were excessively pretty, and gave colour to a face which would perhaps otherwise have been too pale: not that dark colour verging on purple which Lely has bestowed on some of his beauties, and which gives one the painful impression that they have been indulging in black currant jam, but a bright light-red. It was not the first morning that I saw all the excellences of her face, but afterwards, when I grew to know her better.

There were two lessons a week, and I used generally to join in them; she was very quiet at first, but gradually we began to get better

friends, and she would talk about Germany, or England, or on any general subject in the most amusing and lively manner; but I could never by any means whatever lead her to speak of herself, her former life, her reasons for coming to England, nor say a word, in fact, that could afford any clue to her history. There was a mystery about her; of that I felt very sure. Now the unravelling of mysteries was considered rather my forte, so I felt on my honour, as it were, to penetrate it. There had been an eagerness about Herr Blume's manner which had struck me at the very outset of the affair, and, strange to say, once or twice during the lessons, I had been possessed by a strong feeling that I had seen her before: yet the face was perfectly strange to me. The more I studied it, the more convinced I became that I must be labouring under some delusion—there was not a feature familiar to me. The lessons continued regularly until a little time before Christmas, when one morning she failed to make her appearance.

I knew the number of the house, though I had never been to her lodging, so before luncheon I walked round to see after her. The door was opened to me by an untidy-looking maid, and as I advanced into the passage, loud, angry tones issued from a room on my right. There was no help for it but to proceed, and this I was doing when I was almost knocked down by a fat, dirty, angry woman coming hastily out of the room, her head turned round, still addressing some one within.

'And sure it's not my house as 'll hould ye, with yer fine clothes and yer fine airs, if it's not a civil tongue ye can keep in yer head!'

She flounced off, and I ventured a peep into the room. It was in a state of the utmost confusion; clothes were lying in every direction, on the tables, on the chairs; and boxes half packed stood about the floor.

On one of these, looking like Scipio amid the ruins of Carthage, sat the *fräulein*. Another woman, black haired and bright eyed, with an angry red spot on either cheek, was

busily packing a box. On seeing me, the *fräulein* started up.

'Ach! I am so glad to see you,' she said. 'I must explain why I have not come to you. This woman, Thérèse, has made her angry—furious: poor Thérèse, she was foolish. The woman has said we leave the house, so I go instantly; but where to, that I know not.'

This was wretched. I tried in vain to make her tell me what Thérèse had said, thinking it most probably some misunderstanding which had arisen owing to their not understanding each other's language; but she evaded it, declaring, however, that it was impossible for her to remain.

I made up my mind on the spot, and rushed home to ask my mother to invite her to come to us until after Christmas.

'My dear Rachel, I really don't think I can do it; she is quite a stranger, you know nothing, or next to nothing, about her. I think you had better give it up: no doubt she has friends in London.'

Such were the arguments with which my dear mother attempted to dissuade me from my request; but I could not be dissuaded.

'Darling mamsey,' I implored, caressing her, 'just this once; you acknowledge that she is very nice; and indeed she has no friends, except Herr Blume and his wife, who live themselves in lodgings. You mustn't shut up your heart at Christmas time: just for a day or two,' I entreated, giving her a hug, 'until she can find a place to go to.'

I knew she would not be able to hold out long.

'Well, Rachel,' she said, 'it's all upon your shoulders. You're a naughty self-willed girl,' she added, smiling, and shaking her head deprecatingly, as I dashed off to bring back my beauty to Bryanston Square.

It was just as I expected, they all fell in love with her; her sweet face, her high-bred, gentle manners, her charming grace; but most of all, she fascinated Bertie, that unpolished schoolboy whom we owned for a brother, and in so doing caused

the benedictions of his sisters to rain down upon her head.

Never were there such peaceful Christmas holidays within the recollection of the 'oldest inhabitant,' and we trembled at the idea of losing our presiding genius. My mother, also, joined heartily in our entreaties for her to stay, for beside really liking her, it was impossible to overlook the immense advantages which accrued to us from her society. She could scarcely speak a word of English, but German, French, and Italian she seemed to be equally fluent in; and, wonder of wonders, Bertie, by New Year's Day, was positively beginning to talk French with, I won't say a good, but certainly a less extraordinary accent than when he came home.

This undisputed possession of the field was perfect bliss to him: he lionized her about London, taking her to all sorts of museums and places, which he professed to think it quite necessary that she should see.

In my own mind I felt sure it was for the pleasure, pure and simple, of having such a pretty person under his protection, and entirely dependent on him.

I think she liked him, and his boyish admiration. One evening, as she was talking, or rather gesticulating, to my mother—for their conversation was mostly carried on by signs—he gave me a nudge that would have been amply sufficient to awaken St. Paul's to attention.

'I say, Rachel, she is pretty,' he said, in a low tone, 'there's no mistake about that; you should see how all the fellows stare at her, and I don't believe she knows it, now,' he added, in an inquiring sort of voice, as if he weren't quite sure of the truth of his own statement.

'Don't you think so?' I asked, innocently.

'Well, I don't quite know how she can help it,' he said, meditatively; 'when I took her to the Colosseum, the Guards were just passing, and you should have seen how they looked at her, and wished themselves in my shoes, I know; and I think they're pretty good



judges,' he said, in an approving tone.

So we went on very smoothly until New Year's Day, when she began to declare she must leave us. I promised to help her to find lodgings, if she would wait for a day or two longer.

The time of her visit had not been altogether unfruitful in affording me some insight into her history—an insight obtained, however, more through my own observation than from any information vouchsafed by her.

It was one day in Christmas week, I think, she was going to the pantomime, or something of the sort, with mamma, Agnes, and Bertie. She was sitting with her opera cloak on, talking to Bertie, before they went, when I came into the room; her back was turned to the door. As I looked at her, suddenly, like a flash of light, a host of recollections forced themselves into my mind. I was no longer in our own drawing-room, but in a well-known salon in Vienna, blazing with light, listening to *Mademoiselle de Murska*. The figure which was before me now was before me then, a few rows in front of us. The cloak in itself was peculiar—white, with a very beautiful border of blue and silver—that perhaps helped my memory; but as the light shone on the crisp, golden hair, I wondered at my own stupidity; yes, there could hardly be any mistake, I thought, as I remembered a letter which I had received some time before from my friend in Vienna.

'Look, Rachel, look!' she had whispered to me that night, 'there is the great beauty, Countess Arnheim.'

'Where?' I asked, trying to look in every direction at once, for I had heard a great deal about her, but had not seen her.

'There, to the left; don't you see? Ah! what a pity! she has turned her head.'

I could not help laughing at her disappointed tone; she was always so eager that I should see all I wished.

'Never mind,' I said, 'she will be sure to turn it back again;' but she

didn't; never during the whole time that we both sat there, though we were not more than two yards from the place she sat, did she turn once, so that I could even see her profile; just the pretty outline of her cheek, and the mass of crisp, rippling, golden hair was vouchsafed to us. Of her companions we saw quite enough, a dark, handsome woman, and a middle-aged, keen-eyed officer, who sat on either side of her. After the concert was over, in the little excitement of securing a *droeschky*, I thought no more of her. This evening, however, she was brought forcibly to my mind, as I entered the drawing-room, by the outline of *Fräulein Dorn's* face, and the white and blue cloak.

Not till after they were gone did I produce my writing-case, and, settling myself in a comfortable arm-chair before the fire, proceed to dive into its recesses after my Vienna letters.

I fished out four or five from its capacious pockets, but the right one did not make its appearance, and I was just beginning to echo my poor mother's wish, that I were more tidy and methodical, when I made a good haul and brought up the letter I was in search of: it began,—

\*Köthener Strasse 10, Wien-May.

'DEAREST RACHEL—

'My letter, you see, is dated from our old quarters. We have taken these rooms again, for though not so large as the others, they are much cleaner, and I think more comfortable. It makes me quite melancholy to go into your room. Char has it now. We all miss you dreadfully; it takes away half the pleasure of things, having no one to talk them over with, though really in these days of excitement there is no time for reflection; one simply has to keep one's mouth open to swallow the next new thing. There seems not to be the slightest doubt now about the war. I believe Count Bismarck has intended there should be war from the first. Talking about offering them an indemnity for Holstein! offering a fiddlestick! It's a very bad business altogether, it seems to me, and it

serves them right, of course, the home people will say, for having joined in it, but why Prussia should come off so much the best I can't see. General Lobetska came in this morning, and he thinks he will have to go the day after to-morrow. There was a report that two Austrian regiments had crossed the Saxon frontier, but that has been contradicted. You can imagine the chronic state of excitement in which we are kept by all sorts of contradictory rumours. The troops here seem confident enough of victory. By the by, young Siegelheim came in yesterday for a minute; his high spirits were quite funny and infectious; he had just gone home on leave, but had been recalled of course. The officers seem all delighted with the prospect of war: they only look at the bright side; for my part, I think it is very awful. And I *cannot* understand how they can rid themselves of the thought that, though the campaign may be a successful one, yet to some among them, perhaps to many, it will in all human probability bring death; and who those some will be it is the question I cannot help asking myself; which are the ones who are walking these well-known streets for the last time; looking for the last time upon the old familiar faces, who will, in a few weeks, perhaps in a few days, be farther removed from us than thousands of miles could remove them, wrapt in that sleep, upon which no roar of cannon, no shout of friend or foe, can ever break. I confess to me it seems very terrible. I suppose it is a woman's view of the case; but I mustn't write any more of this sort of stuff, or I shall make you dismal. I daresay you don't feel particularly lively now, but you shall have any news that we hear, especially of that regiment to whose uniform you used to be rather partial. There, how horribly I have made you blush, only as there's nobody but me in the room it doesn't matter. Oh! there is one piece of scandal for you, which has, however, made less noise than if it had happened at any other time, for which I suspect the parties concerned are very thankful. Do

you remember your seeing, or rather not seeing, the young Countess Arnheim at a concert? Well, she has actually gone off, and no one knows where to; but to begin at the right end of the story, for, as I happened to be an eyewitness, I can vouch for my version being the correct one. We were at a ball at the Nesselroders, and she was there; she was looking most exquisite, I thought, though some people in the room said she looked not what she had been. Her husband was there too, of course, but I didn't see him go to her once the whole evening, though she was surrounded by a good many gentlemen; there was one man, a Frenchman, in the Austrian service, who never left her. His attentions, I certainly thought, were rather marked, but I didn't see any return on her side. You know that room off the hall at the Nesselroders, where one takes off one's things. Well, we happened to be there, putting on our cloaks; I was ready to go, and was standing at the door, talking to Herr von Langen. The countess was standing in the hall, waiting for her husband, I think, laughing and talking with a few gentlemen. All at once the count strode out of one of the dancing-rooms, and up to her. She was so placed under the lamps that I could see her face perfectly, and part of his; she glanced up in his face with a smiling look of inquiry in her beautiful eyes, which was answered by a fierce scowl and a muttered oath. Of course there was a breathless silence; no one knew what to say; no one ever does on such occasions.

"Leopold," she half whispered, "has anything happened?" She had sprung forward eagerly, and laid her hand upon his arm. His face worked frightfully as she gazed up into it with beseeching eyes, but he turned it from her. "Happened!" he said, in a loud, harsh voice, shaking her off roughly, "no, nothing particular. By heaven, no! nothing to you; I, fool that I have been, have found it more."

"For God's sake, Leopold, come away," she whispered in an agony. She thought him mad or drunk, I

believe. He did not shake her off this time, but taking both her slender white wrists in his iron grasp, he held her at half arm's length; and then, before those men, looking straight into her face, he said most cruel things to her. I don't know how she bore it—it was cruel, horrible; if I had been one of those men, I think, whether it were right or wrong, I must have struck him down. It took less time, far less, than it has taken me to write it. I could not tear myself away from watching them; but I sincerely trust it may never be my lot to witness such a scene again. Poor thing! her eyelids never drooped: she looked into his dark, angry eyes, with a half-amazed, half-imploping look. I think she had a dim sense of how very awful it was before these people; but that was all swallowed up in the agony and astonishment his words caused. When he had finished speaking he dashed her hands away and strode off, leaving her standing there, a broken lily, but turned again after he had gone two steps. "Monsieur," he said, looking at the French officer, "I recommend this lady to your protection." His whole countenance was convulsed with passion and deadly pale. That woke her up: her face quivered as with a sudden flash of anguish, and she turned to a young beardless officer who had been standing good-naturedly trying to shield her from the many pitiless prying eyes; "Will you be kind enough to take me to my carriage?" He could not look at her, but gave her his arm, and took her away almost tenderly. He was a merry, rough boy, and I dare say they had had many a laugh together; but I don't think either of them laughed then. She would have walked straight out into the cold bitter night in her ball dress, had he not stopped her and helped her servant to wrap her up in her furs. That was all I saw of it, and it was indeed quite enough. The next day we heard she had gone, as I quite expected. I most certainly would have gone too in her place, and I am sure you would; but I am writing you the most unconscionable

letter: that is the way when I sit down to write to you: I intend just to write one sheet, and I scribble on and on till two o'clock sometimes. I am glad Aunt Margaret doesn't examine the candles! If she ever should, I will tell her that I find Vienna candles delicious eating, and can't resist the temptation. Best love to your mamma and the girls from all of us: they're all fast asleep, but of course they would send it if they were in possession of their faculties. Good-night, dearest. I must go to by-by.

Ever your  
'STEPHANIE.'

It was a long letter, but I read it all through, and, when it was finished, laid it in my lap and sat gazing into the fire, and musing over those eventful days in which she wrote. How different now to then! Things were changed in Vienna. What was then but conjecture had become sad reality. All had taken place with such fearful suddenness as made it almost impossible to realise. I sat over the fire and tried to imagine it all, and re-read more recent letters, in none of which, however, was the Countess Arnheim's name mentioned. I began to doubt the truth of my own surmises: it seemed almost impossible that she should have come to England in that manner, and remained quietly for such a length of time: she, the petted Vienna beauty, giving lessons in England and living in London lodgings! No, it was hardly credible; but there was one simple test which occurred to me; by copying out a small portion of that letter, and putting it in some place where it would fall into her hands, at a time when I should have an opportunity of watching her, I did not doubt but that I might read in her face the truth.

And I did copy it, translating it into French. I chose that part in which her name was mentioned; but when it was done I put it by, and delayed to use it.

One day we were talking of Christian names, and she then told me, for the first time, that hers was

Valerie, and asked me to call her by it. Another time she showed me a little book, with 'Valerie' printed in it, and something over the name scratched out, which I felt sure must have been a coronet. I longed to know; and yet though I often thought of putting her to the test which I had devised, my heart failed me. Why should I seek to penetrate her mystery, and lay bare the bitter secrets of her heart? So I forbore and waited. However, it was not destined that she should go from us as she had come. On the 3rd of January my mother came down to breakfast with rather a troubled face, and after I had read my own letters, she passed one for me to read, without a word. It was from my Aunt Honora, a sister of my mother's, whose husband had a house in one of the hunting counties.

'Dear Margaret,' it began, 'I am in great distress. The house is full of men, and only one lady besides myself—young Mrs. Charteris. Do, I beseech you, come to me the first day you can. They are frozen up, and there is no hunting, and some of them don't even play billiards. Francis says I ought to do something to amuse them, but what can I do? It is so miserable. Bring all the girls, and your German friend and Bertie. I entreat you not to refuse. Francis wishes it also so much. Write at once and let me know when I am to send to meet you.'

'Your affectionate sister,  
'HONORA C. HERRIES.'

This was the letter, written in a scrambling, uncertain sort of hand, which my mother gave me. I had scarcely finished it, when Bertie said, from the other side of the table, 'What's the row, Rat? shy it across;' so I shied it across, as he called it, and the young gentleman was pleased to express his highest approval of the plan.

'Be alive, now, girls, and pack up; the weather'll break, you'll see, and then I shall get some hunting out of the old rascal.'

He settled on the spot, I believe, the horse he intended to ride. Alas!

for human proposals. All the world knows that there was no hunting for those first weeks of January. But it wasn't for his amusement that my mother determined to go. With tears in her eyes she re-read the letter when we were alone in her room, whither she had called me after breakfast to consult about it.

'Poor Honora! poor Honora!' she murmured. 'Yes, my dear, I think we must go; there will probably be but little pleasure to any of us, but I think it is right. I can leave Agnes in Eaton Square with your uncle.'

As I looked at the feeble, shaky writing, I too ejaculated from my heart, 'Poor Honora!' She had married a man who had discovered her weakness, and had been a very tyrant to her. It seemed as if he had all but stamped out her identity. It was not from age that her letters were ill-formed and trembling; I hardly think she had any handwriting in particular. So a note was despatched to say we would come on the Monday. We might have managed to go before, but after some consultation it was fixed for that day.

'Impossible! I cannot spend Sunday there,' my mother had said, decidedly; and even Bertie, I think, was glad when it was settled that we should spend that quietly at home.

For myself, I did not much care whether we stayed or went. I had not much hopes of the party likely to be assembled at Cheddington. The only two people I was sure of meeting were men whom I particularly disliked; but then it was also possible that some of the others might be very pleasant; as for Sir Francis Herries himself, he could be as agreeable or as disagreeable as he liked—under the present circumstances it was not unreasonable to hope that he would be at least civil. From him, that was sufficient. After a great deal of persuasion, we succeeded in making Fräulein Dorn promise to accompany us; and Monday afternoon saw us all at the station, where the carriage from Cheddington was to meet us.

Long before we got to the end of our drive, the windows were so frozen that we could see nothing of the park or house; and we were all heartily glad to find ourselves in the wide, old-fashioned hall, where the fine oak carving, seen by the light of the blazing fire, for the winter twilight had set in, called forth Valerie's warm admiration.

There were a great many hats about, and as we followed the servant up the stairs, I could hear the sharp crack of the billiard balls. It was quite a procession, and in spite of her earnest invitation, I think we rather overwhelmed my aunt when we invaded her sitting-room.

She was looking the same as she had always looked to me—a faded, worn-out picture, fragile and helpless, with traces of a beauty, not dimmed by age, but by unhappiness. She stretched out her hands kindly to us all, however, kissing us, and welcoming *Fräulein Dorn*.

'Margaret,' she said to my mother, sitting down immediately again in her low chair by the fire, 'you must take it quite into your hands, the entertainment of the young people,' and she tried to smile, a weary, withered smile.

'I give you free leave to do exactly as you like. There are the Hobarts; I thought of asking them before, but I was afraid their mother would object to their coming.'

Mr. Hobart was the rector, and had a very nice wife and two pretty daughters.

'I don't think they mind short notices,' said my aunt, passing her thin, white hand wearily across her forehead; 'you can ask them to dinner to-morrow night if you like.' And in this way was the power passed over to my mother, but in truth, in my aunt's hands it was only nominal. For years she had been the mistress of her own house but in name, letting her authority slip away from her through sheer weariness and want of energy. She had married, fifteen years before, a man for whom she was in every way unfitted—a man whom she neither loved nor respected. She had truly received her punishment; but I think also that there was another

side to the question. I think that, wretched as might be her lot, she had inflicted a yet deeper, a more unpardonable injury upon him than upon herself. Possessed of talents of a certain brilliancy, yet weak and easily led, with a woman of a strong and upright character for his wife, under whose influence he would necessarily to a certain extent have been brought, he might have attained to better things. I believe there are many men of this sort; I believe that there are some, even among those who sit in high places, upon whom the daily, hourly, life-long influence of a sympathising wife has wrought very powerfully. Of the master and mistress of Cheddington one scarce knew which to pity most. For weeks he would leave her, going to Paris with a friend, a Mr. Sartoris, the owner of a large estate in Devonshire, but who spent his time mostly abroad, except during the hunting season, when he was generally at Cheddington. A man who had not set foot on his own land for years.

My aunt used sometimes to plead for a house in London, but on this point Sir Francis was inexorable; pleading and complaining were alike in vain, until she at last, half from the listlessness of a broken spirit, half from real suffering, faded away into the weak helpless woman she was at this time. Once she had sought with an amazing courage or a childish imprudence, I know not which to call it, to persuade him to take her to Paris. 'She was tired of this life,' she urged. 'If London was denied to her, she would at least like to see a little of the world—that Parisian world to which he was always going.'

He looked at her with a gloomy sneer. 'See the world, madam? See the devil!' he answered, and strode out of the room. And I think he was about right. Miserable, lonely, desolate as Cheddington might be, it was better, yes, a thousand times better for her than Paris—with him. Not that he would have ever consented to take her had she even expressed her willingness to look upon that personage to whom he had thought fit to

allude. It was childish in her to ask it, but it was the last time.

'I shall never ask him again, my dear,' she said, with plaintive querulousness, to my mother, 'never.'

As I had expected, he was civil enough to us all during this visit, and when the skating began was very anxious about the ponds, that they should be well flooded at night, and that everything should be arranged exactly as we liked. We had on the whole a delightful week. There were some very pleasant men besides my two horrors, Mr. Sartoris and Lord Cosmo Fox, who, strange to say, though they didn't generally agree about things, both seemed very much smitten with Valerie. After all, however, it was not strange that she and Mr. Sartoris should be a good deal together; for, with the exception of Sir Francis, he was the only man in the house, I think, who spoke any foreign language with sufficient fluency to be able to talk to her. As for Lord Cosmo, it was droll enough: not a word of any other but his mother tongue could that great scion of nobility utter; it was mute admiration on his part, confined to paying her clumsy attentions. I did hear him one day talking broken English to her, thinking, I suppose, that style better suited to her infantine capacity.

But in spite of Lord Cosmo and Mr. Sartoris, and other little annoyances inseparable from Cheddington, it was a very pleasant visit, and we all enjoyed it the more from having expected something so different. The first day or two that the ice was really good, the female portion of the community assembled at the edge of the ponds, and watched the skaters, but no one ventured on the ice except in chairs; but the third day Mr. Sartoris came up to Valerie, after we had been there a few minutes.

'Won't you venture to try the skates on?' he asked. 'I would promise to take good care of you.'

'I don't think there would be a pair to fit me,' was her answer, given rather indifferently, I thought, as she put out her foot.

Her indifference, however, did not

seem to have the effect of damping his eagerness, for the next thing he said was—

'If I find a pair will you come?'

'Yes, I should like it very much,' she answered.

He instantly sat down, and took off his skates without another word, and went off himself to the house. I was amazed: I had never seen the man put himself out of the way so much for any one before, but Valerie seemed to take it all as a matter of course. She had never known him before, and could not tell how different it was to his usual habits. Presently he returned triumphant, holding up a small pair of skates.

'Whose are they?' Valerie asked, as she sat down and gave him one of her feet.

'I got them at the rectory,' was the answer: 'there were not any ladies' skates up at the house, so, as the rectory people said they were not coming down to-day, I went on there, and asked them to lend me a pair.'

'It was very kind of you to take all that trouble,' Valerie said.

'It was for my own gratification, I am afraid.'

He was bending over her foot, but he looked into her face as he said the words in French, and in such a low, rapid voice that I only just caught them.

It was not the words, but the tone and look that made me watch eagerly the effect on her. Not a shadow of a blush rose into her clear face: she looked over his head with sad, vacant eyes, bent evidently on another scene than that before her. What was there in his words to bring such a sad, hopeless look into the beautiful face? Something seemed suddenly to have stirred within her a crowd of sorrowful remembrances. In a moment it passed, and there was nothing different about her voice or manner when next she spoke. When the skates were on, before she could rise, Mr. Sartoris put out his hands, saying, nervously—

'Now, please take care; you have no idea how difficult it is, even to stand firmly, just at first.'



But she drew back, and with a smile, half arch, half sad, rose lightly on her feet. Then she put her hands into her muff, and glided away with long, slow sweeps. Her cavalier stood still, watching her without a word. I don't think he liked it; it was as if he had been rather taken in, and made to look foolish, and that, in the veriest trifle, was to him gall and worm-wood. When she came back to us, there was more of his usual cool sarcasm in his voice than I had ever heard in speaking to her.

'I bow to your superior skill,' he said, in a half-mocking tone; 'forgive my mistake, and accept my humble apologies.'

Though he smiled, she was very quick to mark the change in his manner, and instantly set herself to work to soothe him: not that I think she cared for him, but she had an innate horror of being disagreeable to anybody, and a delicate sensitiveness with regard to other people's feelings.

His feathers were certainly effectually smoothed, and, in fact, as I watched them, I began to wonder whether he was trying to play with her, or whether he really liked her. The idea of Mr. Sartoris being attentive to anybody, except in his own cool, insulting, detestable way, was an idea so new as to be startling. She was here under my mother's protection as much as we were, and I determined to tell what I had seen. One thing, however, I now resolved to do. I would give Valerie the letter; before speaking to my mother it was better to be sure that there was any cause to interfere. We generally sat together and read or talked in her room the hour before dinner. She had got hold of a French book in which she was interested; I knew if I brought a book she would read that; so I slipped the piece of letter, as it appeared, between the pages of her novel a little way after her mark, and left it on her table. About an hour before dinner, as I had hoped, she went to her room, and I soon followed; but it seemed as though she would never settle to her book. I sat where I could see her face without her see-

ing me, and tried to answer her remarks, feeling horribly guilty. For some time she kept up a desultory sort of conversation, keeping me in a fever of expectation by playing with the leaves of the book.

'How well your uncle speaks French, Rachel,' she said.

'Yes, very well; he goes very often to Paris,' I answered, rather shortly.

'Mr. Sartoris talks better, though.'

'Does he?' I said.

'Why, of course he does; you must hear.'

'Yes; I suppose so.'

'But I wish I could talk to your big Mr. Mountjoy,' she said, reflectively.

'Why?'

'Ach!' she smiled; 'why one does wish those sort of things I know not: he looks so honest and upright.'

'And Mr. Sartoris doesn't, you think?' She raised her eyebrows comically.

'Neither of our Frenchmen are of an open character,' she said, with a wise shake of her head.

This was unendurable, and I was preparing to go, when she said,

'There's a man in this book that reminds me of Mr. Sartoris: listen.' She then read a description of some one, and after that went on to herself. In a few minutes she turned the page where the little piece of paper lay. I saw her sudden start, and then her face grow deadly pale. She looked round the room with wild, hunted eyes, like a stag brought to bay, seeking some outlet for escape. There could be no doubt. In the first moment of certainty I felt heartily sorry for what seemed then my cruelty, and would gladly have undone it had such undoing been possible. Full of remorse and shame, I sat staring at my book. At last the bell rung and I left the room. As I went out I saw that she was seated in exactly the same position, with the novel lying open before her.

When I was safe in my own room I sat down and drew a long breath.

'So it is true,' I said to myself, 'and what then? I cannot tell her that I know about her.' One thing, however, was not now necessary:

there was no speaking to my mother concerning Mr. Sartoris' needful. I had often thought that, though always gracious, she received their attentions with a wonderful indifference. What would the end of it be?

I sat and speculated before my fire until I had scarcely time to dress for dinner. That evening, for the first time, she was not composed, very brilliant, but excitable and nervous, and I fancied she avoided me. They were very busy arranging some *tableaux vivants* for the evening but one after this, and it appeared to me that Mr. Sartoris had contrived that Valerie should have all the principal parts assigned to her. There was little doubt as to her fitness; as I watched her face to-night it looked more lovely than ever before, though there was in it an unrest hitherto unknown. As we were going upstairs she managed to get by me, and said in a low voice—

'I have something to say to you to-night; come into my room when you have had your hair brushed.'

I nodded consent, and we separated. As soon as I thought she would be ready I went to her. She was sitting before the table, wrapped in a white dressing-gown. Thérèse, her maid, was brushing her hair, which fell about her like a golden veil. I could not help thinking of Savanarola. No need of 'capelli morti' here. Had all possessed such hair as this there had been a smaller fire in the Piazza than we read of. Imagine, my dear readers, a bonfire of chignons in Waterloo Place, presided over by the Bishop of Oxford! 'Make haste, Thérèse,' she said, impatiently, as she caught sight of me in the glass, and her maid turned it all back and braided it into one great braid at the back.

She waited till the woman had left the room before she spoke. As the door closed she stood up and drew me gently towards a sofa by the fire. We both sat down. Then, without a word of preparation, taking both my hands in hers, she looked into my face and said—

'So, Rachel, you have found out my secret.'

It was not the way I had expected her to speak, and there was no answer ready on my lips.

'You mustn't mind,' she said, gently, seeing, I suppose, my troubled look; 'I think I am glad. There will be no more reserve between us now, and we can be true friends.'

Of course I kissed her, and of course I told her I would be her friend through all.

'And now,' she said, 'I am going to tell you how I come to be here.'

She then got up and walked once or twice up and down the room, after which she reseated herself in a low chair by the fire.

'But first,' she said, 'may I see that letter from Vienna?' I grew crimson: she looked surprised, then bent her head. 'Yes, yes, I see; perhaps I had better not; it was not fair to ask it.'

Her tone cut me to the heart.

'Valerie! dear Valerie!' I cried, kneeling beside her, 'forgive me! It is not that; I have deceived you; it is written in English, and I copied that bit into French for you to read.' Then, miserable and ashamed, I hid my face in her lap.

'Don't, Rachel, don't!' she implored, in her sweet, clear voice; 'it is no harm; it is far better as it is; better that you should know all the truth since you have guessed so much.'

'But can you ever love me again?'

'Love you!' she answered, with a smile more piteous than tears; 'nay, as you ask me that, dearest, you can hardly know how desolate I am! I have no one else to love.'

But I could not be at rest until I had told her all my conjectures, from the time of first seeing her, and after that I read her the letter. I could not see her face, which was shaded by her hand, but once or twice there was a convulsive movement of her shoulders which almost frightened me. When it was done she said simply—'Thank you.'

Her story, as she told it me that night, was too long to write here. I believed her then, as I know her now, to have been free from the faintest suspicion of guile, though from her own account she must

have been imprudent. It was with a sort of horror I learnt that she actually had not been able to ascertain whether her husband were alive or dead. The night of the ball she had packed up all her clothes, and jewels which had come to her from her mother, and had set off for England. Herr Blume had been her music master in happier days, and to him she applied.

During the whole recital she maintained a pitiful complacency, which had in it, however, for me a pathos beyond all description. It was not like a person relating a story in which they feel any interest—more like a dead man recalling the life to which he can never more return. She described her husband, declaring him to have been noble, generous, brave, but fiery and passionate. Then, speaking of Monsieur de St. Juste, with whom I had seen her, she said, 'I think he was a very bad man, as bad almost as a man can be, without committing murder and that sort of thing.'

I could not suppress an ejaculation of astonishment.

She looked at me with a sort of smiling despair in her sweet shining eyes.

'Ah! you wonder at me,' she said, 'but you can never wonder at me as I wonder at myself.'

Then she ceased staring into the fire and laid her head back upon the chair in a weary way, like a tired child. I almost thought she had gone to sleep, she was so quiet, though when I watched her attentively I could see that her face had grown paler, and every now and then the lips, which were pressed firmly together, were convulsed by a sharp twitching. I had turned away, and was looking absently into the fire, thinking over all I had heard, when with a sort of low wail she sprang up from her chair and began pacing the room.

'O God!' she moaned, 'why have I done this? why have I told you about it? I who have so tried to forget! It is waking up,' she cried, pressing her hands upon her bosom, 'and I thought it was dead! But it will never die!' she added, wildly throwing up her arms.

I knew not what to do, and sat helplessly watching her walking rapidly to and fro: her eyes were wide and wild, but still shining and tearless. This paroxysm, though dreadful, seemed to me, however, more natural than the calmness with which she had told me her history. Suddenly she stopped and turned upon me.

'You give me no comfort!' she cried, half fiercely, half imploring; but without giving me time to answer she turned again and continued, saying in a voice of anguish, 'Comfort! comfort! there is none, why do I ask for it? O God! grant me forgetfulness; it is all I ask.'

Ah, me! comfort indeed there was none to give, but my tears I did give her freely, weeping for this woman who could not weep for herself.

I thought at one time that she was becoming delirious in her grief, for as she paced swiftly through the room she muttered sometimes Italian, sometimes French.

'Toute seule! toute seule!' she moaned, wringing her hands, 'il m'a laissé! il est mort! je n'ai personne dans le monde! seulement le remords! le remords pour toujours!'

At last she threw herself down upon a sofa and seemed to fall into a sort of stupor: she must have been thoroughly exhausted. For some time I remained sitting quietly by the fire, almost afraid to breathe for fear of rousing her again. The silence was only broken at intervals by a coal falling out of the fire, or the clock at the stables striking the quarters. Half-past two, a quarter to three, and still she never moved: at last three struck. It was impossible for me to remain there any longer. We had all agreed to breakfast earlier than usual for the skating; and I knew that she, for one, had promised to skate, though I hardly believed it possible that she could be up after this, much less equal to any exertion. However, I should have no excuse to offer for non-appearance, so I determined to go to bed at once. At first I thought of stealing quietly out of the room; then the thought of her lying there until the morning, per-

haps, in the bitter cold, for the fire would soon be out, stopped me, and I resolved to rouse her and try and persuade her to go to bed. As I moved across the room she started up.

I said as gently as possible, 'You have been asleep, Valerie, I think.'

She pushed back her hair and stared at me for an instant.

'Ah! Rachel,' she said then, in a confused sort of way, 'I had forgotten you: it must be late; you are going to bed, mein Herzchen?'

'Yes,' I answered, 'and you, you will go too?'

'Yes, oh, yes,' she said, but from her manner I doubted her doing it.

'You promise to go now, immediately?' I urged.

She looked at me inquiringly; and I think the remembrance of what had passed only then fully flashed upon her.

'Rachel!' she said, eagerly, seizing my hands and bending towards me, 'I have told you a great deal to-night, more than to any other person living; I trust you, you will never betray me?'

'Never,' I answered, solemnly.

'There, there, I know you will not,' she said, her eager manner suddenly vanishing. 'Good-night, dearest, good-night,' and she kissed me on both cheeks, and then almost pushed me from her.

I don't know how she slept that night, or rather that morning, but I lay tossing on my bed till six o'clock, in vain trying to get to sleep. At last I fell into an uneasy dreaming doze, haunted by a vision of something that looked like Lord Cosmo in petticoats, and who kept incessantly repeating, to the tune of 'Il Bacio,' the two words, 'Toute seule, toute seule,' while I exhausted myself in fruitless endeavours to make the words and music suit each other.

In spite of our promises the night before it was half-past ten before I got down. Lord Cosmo, Mr. Sartoris, and another man, were eating their breakfast in moody silence. It was my private opinion that the two former were waiting for Valerie. Aunt Honora was not down, and the others had already gone to the ponds.

'Good-mornin', Miss Travers,' said

Lord Cosmo, with a charming indistinctness, owing probably to his mouth being quite full of cold pie, which he continued munching while he made his inquiries after my health and out-going intentions: he then kindly employed himself in lurching about the table, collecting before me everything within reach.

'They've all been taking your name in vain, Miss Travers,' said Mr. Sartoris, who was opposite me; 'Fox and I only just came down in time to stop them. They've been abusing you and Fräulein Dorn frightfully, for being the only ones who had broken their getting-up vows. There were some very hard words, I can assure you; weren't there, Fox?'

'Pon honour,' said Fox, 'I think it was you bein' hauled over the coals when I came in; and after that they were chaffin' at me: Miss Travers and her friend they were discussin' afterwards.'

He always called her my 'friend.' I think he had some vague, uncomfortable misgivings (if he ever had a misgiving) that 'Frowlin' was not precisely the proper way of pronouncing that word.

'It don't sound quite right; but I'll be d——d if I do know how to pronounce it now, Miss Travers,' he said to me later in the day, with an I-know-you-won't-believe-it sort of air that was truly edifying.

I didn't express myself as sceptical on that point as he seemed to expect; and directly afterwards he relieved me of his society, careening away to another part of the ponds, like a Dutch fishing-boat in a heavy sea. How I detested the man! He was a born snob—I think his grand name only made it worse.

All that morning we were on the ice. Valerie was, as usual, the centre of attraction: her skating was certainly the perfection of grace. To me there was a change in her from that night. It seemed that in telling me her true name, she felt it no longer incumbent on her to feign any simplicity that was not natural to her. One at least in the room would recognize her right to wear the diamond rings that made her pretty hands look whiter than

morning. There was certainly a change in her dress, which to this time had been extremely simple. That day she wore a tight-fitting velvet dress and petticoat, looped up for skating, and trimmed with narrow but beautiful sable round the throat and sleeves. It suited her admirably; and it was impossible to mistake the undisguised looks of admiration of my companions as she entered the breakfast-room, laughing and talking with Bertie, who had come up from the ponds to look after her. I was amazed at her fresh looks, and, had it not been for my own weariness, should have been inclined to think I had been labouring under some delusion.

Altogether, that was not a pleasant day: the afternoon was spent in arranging the *tableaux* for the next evening. They were to be in the dining-room, as Mr. Sartoris, who had the management of the whole affair, pronounced that to be the best room for them. I only saw one rehearsed; and certainly it did credit to the manager and the performers. He had chosen the scene where Elaine is sent off in the barge. The two brothers were represented by Mr. Sartoris and Mr. Mountjoy, who made an admirable Sir Torre. As for Valerie, no part, in poetry or in prose, could have been chosen for which she was better adapted. Truly it was a picture to make one hold one's breath: the pale, pure, passionless face, in its perfect repose; the long, golden, rippling hair spread round her; and the two men standing over her, mournfully taking a last farewell. I could not help wondering what the thoughts of at least one of them had been while he stood there. It lasted but a moment; for, before we had looked half enough, she opened her eyes and laughed, breaking the spell completely.

'That's quite enough, I'm sure,' she said, getting up, and laughing merrily at the appearance she presented as she passed a mirror. They had darkened the room and had lights; and the noise, even of her voice, seemed strangely discordant with the scene.

After we came out from dinner, poor Mary, my sister, came to me almost crying with indignation.

'Rachel, do you see anything the matter with my hair?' she asked.

'It's certainly not done in the usual way,' I answered.

'Well, no; but Bertie is so dreadfully rude: I wish you would speak to him.' Here there were strong symptoms of tears. 'He said just now, before Mr. Mountjoy, "My eye, Poll! what a fuzzi your wig is in!" He is so vulgar; and you know I hate his calling me Poll.'

Here the tears really began to come; and, though I could hardly help laughing, I managed to console her.

Mrs. Charteris had induced her, it appeared, to accept the services of her maid; and the effect, I must own, was startling. Poor dear Mary! Mr. Mountjoy and she were rather good friends even then—they are something more now; but it took all my powers of persuasion to make her believe he would never think of it again. He had laughed, it seemed, and that had tempted Bertie to go on. We danced in the evening; the Hobarts and two girls who were staying with them came, and so we mustered eight dancing ladies. One of the Hobarts' friends was very intimate with Mrs. Charteris, it appeared. They rushed into each other's arms, and there was a great deal of 'What an age it is since we met,' and all that sort of thing. And a minute or two afterwards I heard the married lady inquire solicitously of the other, 'Now, my dear, tell me all you've been doing; what was your last smite?' I moved away, thinking the conversation—which was, however, carried on in a loud tone—too select for common ears. But I was destined to be annoyed that night. In trying to get into the dancing-room during the evening, I was hindered by the legs of a young man, who, with the help of the legs of another young man, was laudably endeavouring to block up the doorway, instead of dancing. They were both strangers; and I was just debating whether I should ask them to let me pass, or wait till

the waltz was finished, when their conversation attracted me.

My mother was at the piano, playing away with all her might, and they were talking, it seemed, of her.

'And that's the mother,' drawled one.

'By Jove!' said the other, putting up his eyeglass with an air of languid interest, 'what a thrashing the old lady is givin' the piano!'

The young idiot! I could have thrashed him: if he had ever tried half as much to give other people pleasure as my dear mother, he would have been a better-behaved young man. As it was, I think I gave him a mental thrashing, for, just as the other was in the middle of his answer—'Great strength of muscle there; couldn't do it if I tried: quite envy the old woman, 'pon honor'—

I asked to pass; and the waltz just then coming to an end, I crossed straight over to my mother, so that there should be no mistake, and then I looked at them. They were certainly flabbergasted—I will say that for them. But that wasn't all I was to go through that evening. Once, when I went up to Aunt Honora, she attacked me on the subject of Valerie's dress.

'My dear, how very much your friend is dressed,' she said; 'don't you think it's rather odd for a person who professes to give lessons? Why, my dear,' continued my aunt, seeing I made no answer, 'that lace on her gown is magnificent!—quite magnificent!' she reiterated, waxing plaintively eloquent; 'it must have cost I don't know how much.'

Old lace was rather a failing of the poor thing's; and I don't think she would have objected to seeing that in question transferred to her own wardrobe.

'Is it such good lace, aunt?' I said, for want of anything better.

'My dear Rachel!'—this was with a spark of feeble indignation—'you don't mean to say you are so ignorant as not to know lace like that when you see it?'

She then closed her eyes, laid her head back, as if the exertion had been too much for her, and relapsed again into the plaintive.

'She's your friend, Rachel: I only hope it's all right. Margaret says you know very little of her. With men of such a high position here as Lord Cosmo, one must be careful, you know.'

'Good heavens!' I ejaculated to myself.

'Oh, aunt! don't be afraid; it's all right,' I answered, though I could scarcely restrain my bitter laughter. Good heavens! Lord Cosmo! the idea of Valerie corrupting Lord Cosmo! It was really too good. I felt as if I must impart the idea to some one, and for once I felt inclined to make a confidant of Mr. Sartoris, had it been possible to make confidences on such a subject. He of all others would enjoy the joke. The petted, high-born Austrian beauty not considered fit society for the muddle-headed, boorish Englishman! I felt very wrathful at first, but calmed down soon. After all, my poor aunt, with her narrow notions, knew nothing about Valerie, and I knew all, which just made the difference perhaps, though I went to bed that night with a strong desire to be possessed of a great broom with which I might sweep all the Lord Cosmos and such like things out of society in general.

The next day all was bustle; there were a good many people coming to dinner, and more in the evening to see the *tableaux*, which were evidently expected to be a success. Part of the afternoon I helped in the dining-room, where all was confusion, the curtains being put up, while some of the party were altering and arranging dresses and rehearsing scenes. At last I grew quite tired with the noise and bustle, and, wondering how order was ever to grow out of such chaos, I went away to my own room and sat at my window looking out over the park. I felt miserable; not from any real cause, but the nameless feeling that the setting sun gives one, shining through purple trees on a winter afternoon: it almost seems as if hope were leaving the world in that blaze of crimson and orange and purple. It was almost dark when, to my surprise, I heard the crunch of wheels, and the next



minute saw the Cheddington carriage going towards the stables. No one had been out that afternoon, of that I was certain. Some one must have come from the station, but I knew of no one coming. I went down to the dining-room, hoping to see the new arrival on my way, but met no one, only as I entered the room I heard a servant inquiring for Sir Francis. As I had expected, there was still much to be done when the dressing-bell rang. Fortunately it was an irregular sort of dinner, in the hall, served at two tables, and no one seemed expected to appear at the proper time. The tables were so placed that the occupants sat back to back; and it so happened that Valerie and Mr. Sartoris were not my *vis-à-vis* but my *dos-à-dos*. At the other end of our table there had been two places kept, one for Sir Francis, and the other, I supposed, for the newly-arrived guest. The soup had gone when Sir Francis entered the hall by a door near his seat, accompanied by a tall dark man with his arm in a sling. There was a great deal of talking and laughing going on at the other table, and no one there seemed to observe their entrance.

'Do you see that dark man sitting by Sir Francis Herries?' asked my neighbour. 'Can you tell me who he is?'

I could only answer 'No;' then, to see if my own impressions were correct, I asked, 'What country do you think he belongs to?'

'I don't know,' he answered, slowly, looking at the subject of our conversation; 'French perhaps, perhaps Italian or Austrian; at any rate not English,' he said, smiling, as he turned away.

Not English indeed! How the Vienna days returned as I watched him, so utterly unlike the Englishmen among whom he sat. A dark, handsome face, though worn through recent suffering, with eyes of southern splendour. It was evident that he couldn't speak English, for he talked to no one but his host, and once I distinctly saw Sir Francis directing him to the place where Valerie sat. It was not hard to guess who he was; the only thing

I longed for was to warn her in some way of his presence, but it was impossible. She was not near enough to speak to without causing perhaps a scene, and, if possible, that was to be avoided. If I could only have stopped her talking to that man!

Many times during that interminable dinner I saw the deep-set, glittering eyes flare up with a sudden blaze as her silvery laugh or the deep tones of her companion reached his ear, and the dark blood came and went in his face, pale through long illness. Though his arm was in a sling, I noticed that it was not altogether helpless, for he sometimes used it.

Oh, that dinner! and how I disgraced myself! Before it was over I was worked up to such a pitch of excitement that I precipitated a quantity of sticky pudding over old Mr. Palgrave's knees, and then burst into a fit of hysterical laughter in the poor old gentleman's face. At last it was time for us to go, and the other table moved at the same instant. I had not a moment to warn her: she turned towards me, and her eyes instantly fixed themselves upon the lower end of our table. He was standing up, looking full at her. For one second she remained motionless, then, without a word, fell forward upon the floor. Whether the man jumped over the table or went round I never discovered, but before either Mr. Sartoris or Lord Cosmo could get to her he was at her side.

'I will carry this lady, sir,' said Lord Cosmo, thickly, attempting to interpose his great hulking form between Valerie and the Austrian; but the other put him aside with a quiet, courteous determination.

'Pardon, monsieur, it is my right; I am her husband!' he said rapidly in French, a little speech the point of which was entirely lost on the thick-headed Englishman, who looked inclined to resist and follow this black-headed devil of a mossos, as he no doubt called him in his own mind, when Mr. Sartoris laid his hand upon his arm.

'Don't be a fool, Fox, the man's her husband.'

The whole scene had taken place in less than a minute, and the ladies had not yet got out of the room. I turned to look at the speaker; something in the tone of his low, clear voice struck me. He was leaning on the back of his chair, his eyebrows contracted, and looking whitish about the mouth. As our eyes met he moved away and left the hall by another door. He must have been badly hurt. It was the only time I ever saw the slightest change in the cool, cruel, aristocratic face. As for Lord Cosmo, he had sunk back in his chair, his mouth half open, his eyes staring vacantly at the wall. Such an event as this was beyond the wildest flights of his imagination.

'I don't believe it, I'll be d——d if I do,' he muttered; 'I didn't want to carry her up, I'll be d——d if I did.' As I passed through the door I heard the soothing, innocent refrain still issuing from the lips of that young man of 'high position.' Whether he went through the whole verb 'to do' I don't know; if he did, I should say it was about the only exercise in English grammar he had ever indulged in.

It was no use going to Valerie's room, there were too many people there already, and I knew that Mrs. Cherry, the old housekeeper, would do exactly what was right. After two hours' struggling to entertain the people, who were in that state of suppressed whispering excitement in which people will be when there is anything going on which they are not desired to know, I managed to get up stairs. On the landing I met Mrs. Cherry, and asked how she was.

'Pore young lady; reelly I don't know whatever is the matter with her,' she said, folding her hands across the front of her portly person. 'She's no sooner come to than she's haff again, and even when she's awake she don't seem to me in complete possession of her faculties.'

So I went down again to the weary work of entertaining, but found, to my joy, that the people were going fast. Soon after I got away and went to Valerie's door, but all was so quiet that I was afraid to go in,

so went on to my own room, took off my dress, and putting on a morning gown sat down to watch. About half an hour passed, and then a man passed my door, which I had left a little open. He stopped two doors off and went into a room; then I heard voices for a few minutes, and then two people came out. I went to the door with a feeling that I was wanted. It was Sir Francis and the Austrian.

'Ah! that is all right,' said Sir Francis; 'allow me to introduce Count Arnheim to you, Rachel; Miss Travers, the friend of Madame la Comtesse,' he said to the count. 'Rachel, the count would like very much to speak to you.' I bowed. It was an odd introduction, at the door of my room, by the light of bedroom candles.

'You had better go to your aunt's morning room,' Sir Francis said, and I led the way, followed by the tall dark figure. I had only that moment to consider what to do; I had indeed promised not to betray her, but it were surely best to tell him all. It was very dreadful to him, the first speaking, I could see, but as far as I could judge he was a man who would have walked through a wall of fire if he had once made up his mind to do it. In sharp, short, concise words, wrung from him as it were, he told me that his presence was so hateful to Valerie that, so long as he stood by her, she went from faint to faint. At last he had left her, and now he held in his hand a letter which he had written, and which he would leave in my charge, he said, to be given at such time as she should be able to read it. I hardly dared ask him if he were going, it seemed as though it would be stepping on a volcano of pride, and shame, and love, that might burst beneath my feet. If I could but find words to tell him all I knew! but his manner was so desperately stern and cold and uninviting that my thoughts seemed frozen within me. At last I ventured to stammer—

'I think you are mistaken, Herr Graf; it was the sudden shock which has been too much for her.'

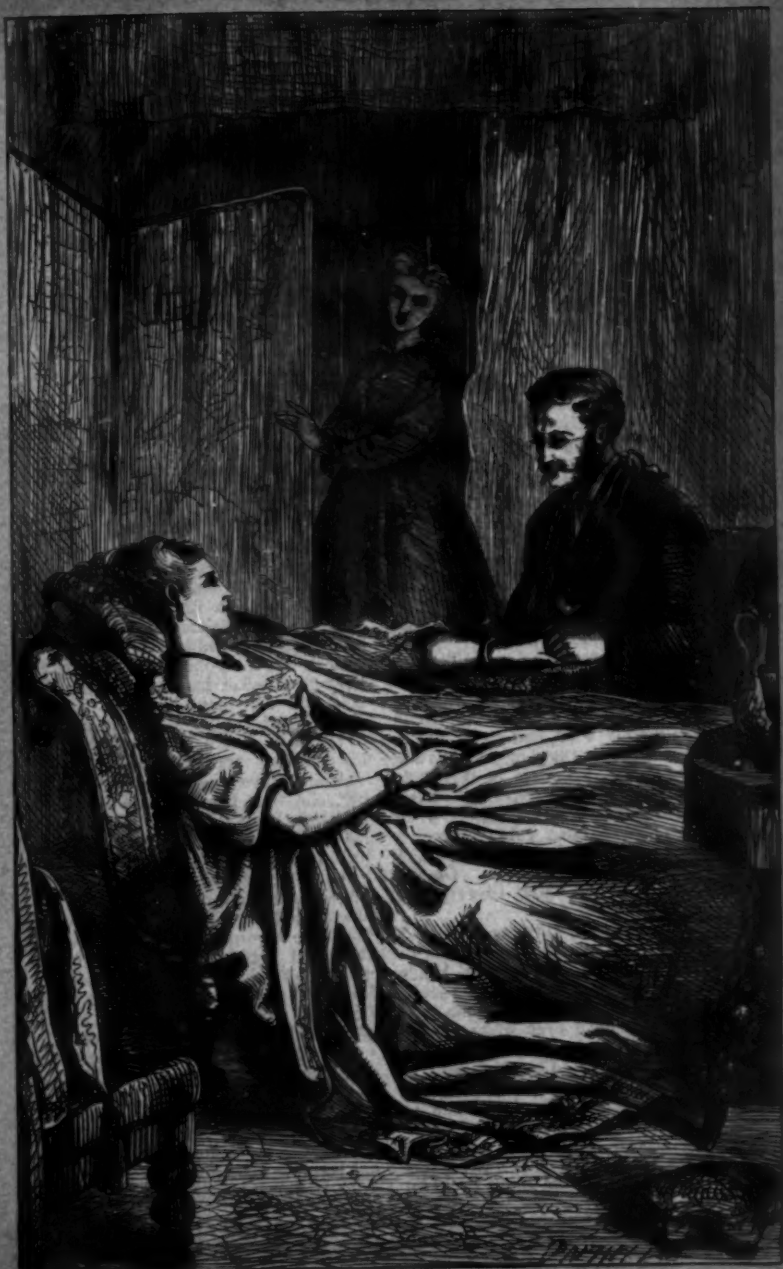
There was a dangerous glitter in



THE END OF THE WORLD

A STORY OF THE FUTURE





Drawn by 'Sartor.'

A VERY SINGULAR STORY.

1. The first thing I noticed when I stepped out of the plane was the cold, crisp air. It was a stark contrast to the warm, humid air of the tropics. I took a deep breath, savoring the moment. The ground below was a patchwork of green fields and small villages, dotted with red-roofed houses. The sun was shining brightly, casting long shadows across the landscape. I felt a sense of adventure and excitement as I embarked on this journey. The road ahead was long and winding, but I was determined to see it all. I packed my bag with essentials and set off on my journey. The first few days were filled with exploration and discovery. I visited ancient ruins, climbed mountains, and experienced the warm hospitality of the local people. Each day brought new challenges and rewards. I learned about the rich history and culture of the region. The people were friendly and welcoming, sharing their stories and traditions with me. I was grateful for the opportunity to experience it all. The journey was not without its hardships, but the beauty of the landscape and the warmth of the people made it all worth it. I had found a new world, one full of wonder and possibility. I was home.

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his eyes even at that slight contradiction, and his manner was colder and stiffer than before, as he answered—

'Pardon, gracious Fräulein, much has passed of which you are no doubt ignorant, therefore permit me to say you can hardly be a judge. I have done and said that which it was folly to suppose she could either forget or forgive.'

He spoke with the air of a man to whom confession was a new and bitter experience.

Then, however, my tongue was unloosed, and I told him, if not quite all, yet enough.

During the whole interview he had declined to sit down, but stood by the mantelpiece, his head resting on his hand, whilst I talked.

When I had finished he came towards me, and holding out his hand, said, in a husky voice—

'God reward you; you have been a true friend to her.'

And yet, strange to say, for all that I think he was disappointed. I think the man, though he hardly knew it himself, would have been happier if there had been more to forgive, if he had not been so entirely in the wrong. He felt the truth of those holy words, 'To whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little,' and he trembled lest her love for him should be dead.

I left him there and went to Valerie's room; it was necessary to finish now the work I had begun. At the door I met my mother.

'She has been asking for you, Rachel; go in to her, but try and keep her quiet; she is delirious, I think; they have sent to Little Stratford for a doctor.'

As soon as she saw me she stretched out her arms. I took her cold, trembling hands in mine, and she drew me towards her, whispering, fearfully—

'Rachel, I have seen him; he must be dead, he looked so awful! Oh! it has been dreadful!' she gasped. 'Why does he come to haunt me like this at last? he must know that it was all false; surely now he must know!' she moaned.

I held her hands firmly and looked

into her face; then I steadied my voice and chose the shortest, clearest words I could think of.

'Valerie, it is no spirit,' I said; 'it is your husband himself, who is here to ask your forgiveness.'

She looked wild and incredulous, then tried to get up; but she was too weak, and falling back burst into a passion of tears.

I slipped away and sent him to her; then, worn out myself with excitement and fatigue, sat down and cried like an idiot. The doctor came soon after, and I was obliged to go to her room. Her husband was sitting by her holding her hand in his. What between her smiles and tears, it hardly seemed the Valerie I had known.

'Rachel, come in,' she said; 'you know him, I needn't introduce you. Oh! you wicked man!' she laughed, 'you have frightened her, I know you have, Leopold,' she said, with her old, quick perception. 'I know exactly, he put on the iron mask. You, poor dear Rachel! and you know you must be friends.' She was in a true Bavarian mood, in spite of her exhaustion. 'Now you must go,' she said in a minute, 'if I am to go to London to-morrow,' and drove him away. When he was gone she threw herself upon my neck. 'Rachel, he is dead!' she whispered, hiding her face; 'he died in the same hospital where Leopold was sent with his wound, and Leopold nursed him, and when he was dying he confessed that it was all a dreadful lie that he had invented to make him cast me off, knowing that he was helpless and couldn't fight; for once he fought a dreadful duel, and after that he took a vow and made a solemn promise to the Emperor never to fight another. It seems so dreadful, but I can't help being very happy,' she sobbed.

The next morning she got away without seeing any of the guests except one. I went with them to the station; as we turned out of the lodge gates the carriage stopped, and Mr. Sartoris appeared at the window.

'I could not let you go without saying good-bye,' he said, 'and wishing you a pleasant voyage, and

may I come and see you next time I am in Vienna?

Valerie looked troubled and glanced at her husband, leaving it to him to answer. He took her hand in his, and, bowing with cold, grave courtesy, said,

'Any of my wife's friends will be welcome to me in Vienna.'

There was no time for more; the count's servant jumped off the box to tell his master that the coachman said we were already late. Valerie shook hands and we drove on.

'You will come to us in the summer, Rachel?' she said, as the train

was moving off; 'you have promised.'

I often hear from her. They are living on an estate which the count owns in Bohemia. There is never a shadow of unhappiness in her letters. I am going to them in the end of August for the autumn, according to my promise, which I fulfil the more eagerly since she has made friends with Stephanie, and has asked her to come for part of my visit. Pray heaven Mr. Sartoris mayn't turn up; but I think that emphasis on the word 'any' must have settled him.

### A LADY'S QUESTION—WHAT SHALL WE WEAR?

WHAT shall we wear? It is a question always under discussion. It is for ever being asked; and it is for the interest of human nature that it should be happily answered; also, it is a question concerning which, justly or unjustly, we have to suffer reproach. Is it true that, as a rule, English women are ill dressed? It is an accusation often enough heard, and hopelessly given in to; yet, if we apply the judgment to a particular class, it is grossly untrue. If, in the London season, you watch those who may be seen every day out of doors in walking or driving costume, with whom to dress well is a duty attached to their position, you will not anywhere find better examples of good taste and costly elegance. In these 'higher circles' of society you may find all that the most fastidious criticism can require; if there are exceptions they are among known eccentricities, and they can be accounted for: but these people have the command of money, they live under a necessity that prescribes propriety in dress, and even great splendour of costume, and what they are to wear, is a question of such magnitude as to require the advice of recognized councillors.

Immense prices are paid to dress-makers, not for sewing seams, or using scissors, but for the judgment

that results from the education of their eyes and the refinement of their taste; these great *artistes* are paid for making every customer look her best.

To take the entire management of her dress is generally a task beyond the power of a lady in the midst of the worry and work, the toil and trouble of a London season. The gowns required for evening wear are so various, the dresses for daylight must be so many, the head-gear for such a multitude of occasions so skilfully chosen, that she *must* live under instruction; she must have her prime minister in the fashionable dressmaker, and her next in council the clever waiting-woman, who reminds, suggests, sorts, and considers; who keeps up a vivid remembrance of what her mistress has worn, and *where* she has worn it; with knots in her memory as to who were there—a mental labour which must not end with the season. Of course there is a terrible list of finery that cannot survive at furthest beyond its *second* night; but other costumes last longer. By-and-by, in the round of the country houses, the perfect handmaiden will take care that the blue brocade shall not be worn where the spiteful Lady X—, who never forgets anything, may see it and smile, because in London she has seen it

twice already. 'Such a pretty dress, Mrs. M——, I always thought so.'

We knew, and greatly respected, a lady, who wrote down daily where she had been, whom she had met, and *what she had worn*; she enjoyed the reputation of being always well dressed. If she wore a dress twice following at your house it was a proof that she loved and trusted you—she never did it by mistake. But all this belongs to the world of persons who have time, money, and high positions; where ministers and prime ministers are to be had, and with whom *to dress* is really part of the serious business of life. In these upper regions there is, to say the least, as good dressing as can be found anywhere. 'No wonder!' cries the reader. Well, no wonder! we echo the thought and the words. All we assert is, that perfect taste in dress is to be found among English women, and that, unquestionably, it is *there*. We are willing, after much thought, great observation, and years of experience, to go to the utmost limits, and declare that a well-dressed English gentlewoman is the best-dressed woman in the world, and that she can walk in her silk attire better than any woman in Europe, a Spaniard alone excepted.

But if, now, we descend from these highest walks of life and fashion to the broader fields where the multitude meet, and where *the nation*, in its women, is fairly represented, how is the accusation of our being an ill-dressed people to be met? Not quite so boldly, we must confess. And for good reasons; for, indeed, we must call the reasons we are going to give in explanation, *good*, knowing motives; but they are only good because of ignorance—ignorance of better modes which are even more consistent with those most excellent motives.

Here is a list of 'good' reasons from which bad dressing results.

1. Not to appear as lightly led away by frivolous pleasures.
2. Not to yield to suggestions of personal indulgence.
3. Not to spend more money than might be convenient.

4. Not to be like lovers of change.

5. Not to be thought *fast*.

Here are five reasons, very good, when the motives are considered in a moral point of view; and very ridiculous, unsound, and, in fact, disgraceful, when examined by the mirror of truth—which every lady should keep in her dressing room—and by common sense.

To take these 'reasons' as they come, let it be at once granted that frivolity is an unbearable vice; but a woman ought to have an honest pleasure in dress, just as she should have pleasure in any successful triumph of civilisation—the perfect cooking of an every-day dish, for instance. The every-day things of life, by being habitual, are taken out of the region of frivolous pleasure. If any persons say they really do not care for dress, it is as absurd as to say they do not care for cleanliness—that they see no decency in keeping up respectable habits. To be a sloven is not meritorious; it is, probably, to be idle and lazy, and possibly to be unclean.

In 1802, when Madame Récamier, so celebrated for beauty, talents, and fashion, visited London, she walked in Kensington Gardens dressed *à l'antique*; that is, as nearly like a draped statue as possible; with her hair down her back, a white veil over her head, and scarcely as many folds in her outer garment, and almost as few under ones as you may see exhibited by the figure of Britannia on a penny. The English ladies then wore very clinging robes, and small straight bonnets, with scarfs and folded draperies, or, perhaps, a fringed, soft shawl hung on the shoulders so as to trail to the ground, and fall away from the arms, preserving as much the general effect of a draped statue as possible, wind and weather permitting. The amount of absurdity which the contemplation of such *elegantes* as Madame Récamier presented, was, however, new in the world. It is hard to believe that, only a few years before, our grandmothers were sitting to Sir Joshua Reynolds in the fascinations of a costume which must always claim admiration. The bodies wrapped,

or square, the modest muslins, the hanging lace—and the faces so honest, without a line of the self-consciousness of the robed à l'antique period—a period when English women looped up their scanty dress on one side only, to show the low slipper and high sandalled ankle as they stood in the *pose statuesque*; and damped their flesh-coloured silk stockings to show the ankle perfectly, dying of the practice as many did. It now strikes us that it was a heavy price to pay, when to go without stockings would have been safer, as to health, and what the proprieties, other things considered, need not have boggled at. But *la frivolité* reigned, and had her victims sacrificed to her: we do not think that any woman, under the wholesomer influence of the present day, need fear being entrapped into such idolatry. Indeed, as to that worship, it no longer exists.

As to the second reason on our list, it ought to be dismissed as a mere excuse. To dress well is a trouble, and not an indulgence. Let us pass on. The fear of spending too much money is an honourable timidity, because it has its root in honesty. But it may be doubted if there is any more inconvenient extravagance than neglected dress. For six months or more the prudent lady spends 'next to nothing.' Suddenly, before the year closes, some unthought-of occasion arises when she has to be dressed. The great question comes as to what shall she wear? Money has to be spent; the very money she thought she had saved; not by little and little, when it would not have been felt, but painfully, in a lump, to her grief, for she had not laid it by; to her impoverishment, for she has to borrow from the future; and probably in her necessity, still desiring to save, and in dread of extravagance, some important details are left out—or an inferior arrangement 'made to do,' and she is not *well* dressed after all. So fails the third of our reasons, and we come to the fourth.

Let us immediately confess that not to like to be among the lovers of change is a wholesome fear, and

very necessary to her who would be always and really well dressed. And so it seems like a contradiction to say that the rapidity with which English women will give in to the adoption of some particular style on the mere word of a saleswoman or a dressmaker that it will be in vogue in the season is well known. English women will never be well dressed till they learn to think for themselves. They must also learn to use their judgment on themselves as those who contemplate their appearance not as a medley of disjointed facts but as a whole. A woman is not well dressed who has on a sweet hat, an exquisite India shawl, a lovely cambric muslin dress, and the smartest pair of be-buttoned boots with 'simulated' lacings. These things may help to make up a well-furnished wardrobe, but they are not intended to be worn together. The extreme of this style was found in the historical Indian chief who received some officers at his levée attired in Hessian boots, a short tiger-skin petticoat, a shell jacket, and a Scotch cap. Last year, the coming in of extremely high-heeled boots, which this year's taste may or may not confirm as an accepted custom, suggested the use of a cane. Charming little dandy walking-sticks supported the almost tottering steps of fashionable belles in the Continental resorts of fashion, and were really very desirable appendages to the costume of a lady whose figure was thrown alarmingly out of the perpendicular. Then, to improve the figure at the waist, an article of dress was worn under the petticoat to make the bending of the back assume a more graceful line. It is not to be denied that a thoroughly well-got-up demoiselle in this style, at all points quite complete, was a very pretty sight. What was the consequence? People were found to use the cane without the shoes, and the *panier* without either. They had never contemplated themselves as a whole; and a terrible exhibition would be made sometimes when these new things were adopted without the purchase of a new dress or the reform of an old one; or when

the train was worn with old loopings-up. We abstain, from pure charity, from describing the consequences. These follies have caused it to be said of our English women that they are ill-dressed. The cases we have given are extreme cases, and of course rare: but the same fault may be seen every day if you look out for them in any part of London frequented by people who *ought* to dress well.

No more becoming costume has been invented in our time than the looped-up velvet dresses with the petticoat showing beneath. Very pretty, very tasteful, very becoming, very convenient, and therefore they have been of very general adoption; but what havoc people have made with their appearance in the matter of petticoats! The velvet surface imperiously demanded the companionship of some refined material. Silk, or soft fine-textured wool of colours that were enriched by the accout of the black velvet were the only things admissible. But have we not seen coarse striped camlet, and scarlet camlet made staring by black braiding, or roughened by frills? It has been difficult to teach people not to choose a petticoat as a petticoat, but as an annexation to the gown. But then the old dread of expense rose up. Silk and satin petticoats! Impossible! These exquisite wools! why they are good enough for dresses themselves. Of course they are; they are for exhibition; with the upper velvet they make a costume. You must take your dress as a *whole*.

The persistence with which English women make mistakes arises unquestionably in a great measure from the rapidity with which they yield to other people's advice and assurances; and because they will not think for themselves.

A perfectly well-dressed gentleman in a milliner's room was giving directions for the changing of certain flowers in a bonnet she had been buying. 'Oh, don't change them!' cries a young friend; 'they are so lovely.' 'I can't afford to wear them,' was the unexpected reply. 'It would cost me fifteen pounds. I have not an out-door

article in my wardrobe which could be worn with that exquisite shade of mauve.' The lady liked the flowers, but, first of all things, she considered herself.

But the English have lately learnt the beauty and the value of black. France certainly taught that to this country. It tones, unites, and yet gives distinctness. Two or three black dresses of good materials are necessary both for economy, effect, and convenience; a woman may then keep to a few colours as belonging to her style, and always preserve a well-chosen and harmonious exterior.

Last on our list of things that prevent our countrywomen from being well dressed is the dread of being thought *fast*. They will often be guilty of adopting a scrap of a costume, but they shrink from the whole. But 'all or none' is the dictate of common sense, as it is the law of fashion; and to escape the possibility of looking *fast* by the certainty of looking ridiculous is a very bad bargain. No one need be in a hurry to adopt a new thing. Wait. If you are doubtful, always keep quiet, and wait. But if a fashion comes in which appears to suit your life and promises to add to your comfort, study its accessories, and accept it at once. For one thing is certain—if a new fashion is convenient, dismisses a trouble from your life, and adds to your happiness, *it will live*. Short outdoor walking costumes, easily taken off and put on, being worn with bodices, have been acknowledged as a domestic mercy, and will live. The disappearance of covering from the back of the head would not have become so universal but for the uncomfortable crowns of the old-fashioned bonnets, which would not stay on the head, and were receptacles for all the winds that blew in the winter. At last people tied up their heads in an ornamental half-handkerchief, and got rid of them. The present style of bonnets may be carried to an extreme, but no woman old enough to remember the bonnet of the past can say they are uncomfortable; their work may not be much, but they do

it honestly; and they, too, will live, though changes may be made in them; the old bonnet which wearied the neck, rubbed the ears, and had to be tied severely tight under the chin to keep it from troubling the shoulders, will scarcely return in our time; its memory among surviving sufferers is too painful.

All good reasons for bad dressing may then be answered generally by two sentences of kind advice. Use your judgment with consideration and courage, and view your appearance as a whole. And now we will say one last word—as important as the proverbial postscript of a lady's letter. Let us bespeak attention, for we shall announce a discovery. There is a reason for English women being ill dressed—there is something that prevents the successful use of reason, and makes a perfect judgment impossible. It is this. That necessity among French women, the *long looking-glass*, is a luxury among English women, and scarcely to be found among house furniture below a certain position in life. How can anybody tell how she looks if she has no means of

seeing herself? The important length of dress, and sweep of train, and effect of trimming, is left to—luck! These great things take their chance. Ladies are condemned to see in their looking-glasses their faces only. Is it any wonder that there are a large number of persons whose whole idea of dress is confined to a bonnet? Possibly a generous ambition, if it be winter, has been satisfied by the possession of a sealskin jacket, the most enticing wear that was ever offered to woman; of course, after a gratified survey of a pretty head-dress, and sleeky shoulders, the poor lady goes off happy, dressed, probably, in a palish brown linsey and a green stuff petticoat.

'O wad some power the giffie gie us,  
To see oursel as others see us.'

Husbands and fathers, ye are the powers; and the 'giffie,' depend upon it, is a long strip of looking-glass in an honest wooden frame, fastened to the wall of every room in which the ladies' question—'*What shall we wear?*' is finally settled and acted on.

## MUSINGS AMONG PHOTOGRAPHS.

MY photograph-book is not one of the grandly-ornamented kind, which might meetly lie on a fair lady's drawing-room table, and it has no cunning device, such as a music-box deftly inserted on the covers—certainly the prettiest sort of photograph-album that has been contrived. Some of the photographs are rough, and they are all roughly kept, and I do not let the book lie about, not caring much that people should see it, if only on this account—that they would care little where I often care much. I never purchased a photograph simply for the sake of filling up my book, nor because a photograph is specially well done and a fine specimen of the art. I have hardly a photograph but some association is attached to it, and for the association's sake it keeps a place in my book. And

sometimes, as on this fresh spring evening, when I do not care to move, and the lengthening sunset invites to thought, I take down my photograph-book and idly turn over its memorial pages.

Some of the links of association are light enough, and are hardly more than those of mere locality. Here, for instance, is a rustic bridge over a brook in a deep Devonian lane. I was greatly struck with the Arcadian beauty of this lane, which lay not far from a famous watering-place where I was staying, and so secured the photograph, and was much pleased to hear that the spot was the favourite of innumerable landscape-painters. It was here I parted with a strong and gifted friend, and I have just heard that in the suddenness and darkness of night he has been called away from



this world. This personal recollection gives individuality to my photograph of the rustic bridge. And, indeed, photographs of scenery multiply so much, that you need bring some human interest into them, to confer any speciality. For after all, beauty resides in the mind rather than in the object, and we bring to a landscape more than a landscape can bring to us. There are mental moods in which sweet sights and sounds are merely mockery, and others where the simplest landscapes are invested with a meaning deeper than can be given by any interpreter—

'I see a hand you cannot see,  
I hear a voice you cannot hear.'

Here, for instance, are photographs of some cathedrals. I chiefly keep them because they recall moods and feelings. These, you see, are foreign: Lausanne, Milan, Amiens. Milan and Lausanne I saw almost consecutively, and they are so contrasted. I keep Milan Cathedral, because I hardly suppose that on this side the grave I can ever receive a sensation of such beauty and wonder. Lausanne, in its severe Protestant simplicity, contrasts strongly, in this respect reminding me of Glasgow Cathedral, which I ought to have somewhere among these, but which, you know, is described, at least in part, in Scott's 'Rob Roy.' But Lausanne Cathedral is grand in its simplicity; and then to climb the tower and survey the wide panorama of lakes and mountains! and then to pace the terrace that Gibbon paced, and to walk in the garden where he walked, that still moonlit night, when he had written off the last page of his history! Amid all the rhetorical glitter of Gibbon's writings there are passages to be found that argue real feeling. Thus: 'There are two causes, the failure of hope and the abbreviation of time, which always tinge with a browner shade the evening of life.' The cathedral might have taught him something better than this; but I am afraid that there is hardly a trace of any cathedral influence on the mind of Gibbon. And here is Amiens. I spent four-and-twenty hours here once, on purpose to ex-

amine the cathedral, and see it in its morning and its evening aspect. I was coming back from Paris, and in its solemnity and quietude there was something very healing to the mind, after the frivolity and giddiness of Paris: for, candid reader, I dare say you have found out we do not all get to stay in Paris without becoming frivolous and giddy. And a cathedral like this—a poem in stones, thoughts in sculptures, devotion in the marble itself—recalls us to the struggle and earnestness and solemnity of life. At the slightest touch, the cathedral portal yields to the seeking hand, and there is quiet space and breathing-time, if you only will, for thought and heavenward aspiration. Yes, these photographs recall phases of mind which it does one no harm to recollect; and I am sorry that my photograph-book has lain so long unopened. And not the less have those English cathedrals potent charms. I am especially attached to cathedrals, and it is my design to visit them every one, if life be spared. The majority of them are cleared off now, and the remainder may be hoped to prove comparatively easy. Here are two Welsh cathedrals which make cities of very little villages indeed. This is St. David's. Notice that massive tower, long beat by Atlantic storms. There was a Pope who declared that two pilgrimages to St. David's were equivalent to a pilgrimage to Rome: and I think he was about right. It lies far off, on a remote corner of the world, cut off even from decent roads, but close to a glorious granite headland and a wild, primitive country stretched around. It was a two days' business, and its photograph may very fittingly deserve this memorial place. Many, too, are the English cathedrals that I have. This one I keep—it is Gloucester—because I came out on a broad lawn and exactly realized some lines of Tennyson:

'As one who, standing where broad sunshine  
laves  
The lawn of some cathedral, through the  
door  
Hearing the holy organ rolling waves  
Of sound on roof and floor.'

This one I keep simply because I remember how grandly and densely the evening shadows gathered in that afternoon of the shortest day of the year, while a sweet silvery voice intoned the prayer, and the light on the altar just made the darkness visible. This one, because I remember how in a melancholy mood a glorious anthem made my grovelling thoughts soar upward, and I thought of good George Herbert's 'Sweetest of sweets, I thank you.' And this one I keep in remembrance of a good old bishop who, with failing sight, followed the fading daylight from room to room of his adjacent palace.

These are photographs of old, very old days, so old that I hardly dare to think of them; photographs of those who were my schoolfellows. There is, after all, few ties so strong as the school tie. And I have a theory on this subject. I think that the real character is shown even more in school life than in college life. The college life is often a transitional period. But what the boy is, clever and generous, or cunning and cruel, that in the long run he will show himself to be in mature life. The efflorescence of youth partially disguises these innate qualities, but they must 'out' eventually. Now this fellow here—I will just take one more look at him before I cut him out and consign him to the ashes—got a sentence of transportation or penal servitude. He was always a fellow of too much craft and too little principle, and none of us were astonished when that matter of the forgery leaked out. And yet he was an engaging dog. I had kept his photograph hitherto, because I happened to be with him when he was arrested. That was a sensation, if you like, and philosophers tell us this life is not to be measured by years but by sensations. I had gone out to see him in his little box near a large town where I had been staying. I knocked, I rang; I was conscious that I was being reconnoitred before I was admitted. Then Branscombe made his appearance. He didn't seem particularly overjoyed to see me, didn't Branscombe. It

was ten years since we were at school together, and looking back through that haze of time, Branscombe's image had appeared to me softly mellowed, and invested with a kind of moral halo which I am now convinced did not in the slightest degree belong to it. 'And don't you remember, Branscombe,' I said, poetically recalling the time when, as we went to the dormitories, we took surreptitious cuts at a ham suspended in a pantry close to the passage which we passed, and gloriously cooked them for supper, by the flame of our tallow dips. I think even Branscombe was affected by this touching incident, but before he could reply a policeman was discovered entering the front gate and leisurely advancing towards the door. And if ever you saw a man perfectly livid, Branscombe was that man. He told me that he would just go and wash his hands, but I have never seen him since. He disappeared through the back door, and cleared off somewhere, but a few weeks later he was apprehended, and a few months later he got his sentence. I bought his photograph to commemorate the spasm of astonishment with which I underwent some sharp interrogatories by the policeman, who suspected me of connivance in the escape, and have put him in my book, from which I now solemnly depose him. But let me, for the sake of my own credit and respectability, hasten to add that my schoolfellows were by no means uniformly of a felonious character. The next one is a County Court judge, 'a fellow of infinite jest,' and I wonder why he allowed himself to be shelved into a County Court judgeship, when it was quite on the cards that he might become Solicitor-General. He tells me—in confidence—that it is an unfortunate circumstance that he is a local judge, that he is confined to one set of towns instead of going circuit like the Westminster judges. Every now and then he has to decide cases where the parties are his friends and neighbours, and in a great number of cases he has a good chance of offending people. It is rather an awkward thing, if, just

before one of these cases comes on, he happens to have received a present of grapes from the hothouse or of game from the preserves. There is the slightest possible flavour of a bribe about it, and if you decide against your generous friend, human nature being what it is, he can hardly help accusing you of ingratitude. Here is my most distinguished photograph of the lot. I think I must take him out and put him in a room where callers may see him and I can casually speak of him as my oldest and most valued friend. He is a great dignitary now, but whether in Church or State I must decline to say. Only he says, that as a dignitary he is rather made to feel the fetters. He is a man who likes to be very loose about the neck, and smoke a short pipe, and go out in a shooting-jacket and do a lot of shooting, and he finds that these things are impracticable now, and Mill 'On Liberty' will never make it anything else for him.

A set of views, very enjoyable when I viewed them, but too trite for discussion; Matlock, Kenilworth Castle, the Warwick Road, Buxton and Bakewell Road, Rydal, Wentwater, Taymouth Castle and the Tay, the Devil's Bridge, near Aberystwith, ditto on the Gothard Pass, ditto somewhere else; the Land's End, the archipelago of the Scilly Isles; Thames at Eton, at Maidenhead, at Cliefden, at Teddington, and so on, kept here from a much larger number on account of the friends who were my companions. Here are the dates: July 10th, Aug. 14th, Sept. 6th, Oct. 3rd, 185—186—. Ah! these were immemorial scenes, but, as I said, they all have their special colouring from the tone and attitude of mind in which they were seen. Do you see this rocky height, sparsely adorned with a few cypresses and pines? It has a history for me. There I made my two earliest assignations, which came to nothing. In the first case the young lady did not keep tryst; in the next case I ignobly failed in the tryst myself. The simple reason was that I had had a bad night, and had overslept myself. But I never saw

the girl again; the family emigrated, I believe, and were lost on the voyage to Australia. The first was a little gay deceiver. From that height I could look across a range of country, and just discern a manorial dwelling-house. From a lodge-gate there is a long sweep of an avenue to the house. Now that house held a young lady of whom as a collegian I was desperately enamoured. We will come to her photograph presently. It is only a few pages off, with a bevy of accompanying nymphs. I used to write verses for that girl, and a friend of mine put them to music. She was very civil to me, because she was an æsthetic sort of girl, and liked the compliment of the music and verses. But I knew there was a fellow, worth very many thousand pounds, ahead of me,

\*Slight Sir Robert, with his watery smile  
And educated whisker.\*

That girl might justly be called the Refuser. I have never met her equal for the number of offers she got. To my certain knowledge I knew of three very fair ones which she received in the course of a couple of days. One night, in a very sentimental frame of mind, I struck out of the city towards that country-house which enshrined the beauty. It was nearly midnight when I arrived at the lodge-gate. I stood leaning over it. In a bedroom-window—her window—there was a light burning. I vaulted over the gate, and in a moment I was on the lawn. Then I listened most attentively. Possibly there might be a dog let loose somewhere. Possibly some gun, loaded with small shot, might be discharged against my sacred person. There was a burglary here some years ago, and since then I believe they have always been carefully provided with dogs and firearms. But I think of the charming beauty of the girl, and advance. A shadow flits across the blind, defined excellently well. I clasp my hand, and, like an infatuated idiot, I remain in a moon-struck attitude for the space of a quarter of an hour. Then the light has vanished, and as the night is

darkened and the wind is risen, I go back squelched and dejected. Some nights afterwards I met her at a brilliant party. We got into a very confidential chit-chat, and I ventured to tell her of my little bit of insanity the other night. She listened with a pleased and amused countenance.

'But, Mr. Jones, there was nothing so very extraordinary in that. You say you were on the lawn at midnight, gazing at my window. Did I ever tell you of Mr. Percy Giles?'

But I never had heard of Mr. Giles.

'Oh, Percy Giles used to come regularly every night and serenade me under my window. He did it beautifully. It was so nice, and used to send me to sleep deliciously.'

'But what became of Mr. Giles? I don't remember ever to have met him at your place.'

'Oh, no! one night, poor fellow, it was very rainy, and he caught the rheumatic fever and died.'

And she said the words with all the nonchalance of a Roman maiden, who would point her thumb downward and bid the gladiator perish.

There she is! My photograph expands into a book of beauty now, and here is a whole bevy. This first page is devoted exclusively to my *Maries*. There are five of them. This particular Mary has the place of honour in the centre. Let me say to her credit that she makes a most excellent wife—only to the wrong man. Like Lord Byron, of whose poetry my own youthful muse was a remarkably good imitation, I had almost an idolatry for the name of Mary. And don't ask me 'what's in a name?' for names and entities go together in a remarkable way. Your Mary is a sensible, modest, clear-headed, nice girl. She has not so much spice about her as your Kate, but then she has infinitely more than a Susan. A Madeleine puts you a little too much in mind of the unfavourable origin of the name. So does Helen, according to the derivation which old Æschylus gives of it. A Margaret is always a Pearl.

'O rare, pale Margaret!

O sweet, pale Margaret!

What lent you, love, your tearful dower,  
Like moonbeams on a falling shower?

And a tricksome Caroline reminds us of Bon Gaultier's lines—

'Pinch, oh pinch these legs of mine,  
Curk me, cousin Caroline.'

Your girls with the out-of-the-way names are always doing out-of-the-way things. Now here's a Maud, who is always a great puzzle to me. She was young, and pretty, and clever, and rich, and yet she married a man, old and ugly, and stupid and poor. On what theory of elective affinities can you account for such an extraordinary arrangement? Then an Emily flirts; Jane is sentimental, earnest, and tender; Lucy is simple and matter-of-fact; Adelaide is lady-like and fantastical; Laura is passionate and vindictive. Of course this is a very partial induction. I have known one or two of the sort; each one has suggested a hasty, and doubtless an unsafe generalisation. Don't suppose that I have been in love with all these young ladies; but still I have been a little *épris* with most of them. There are some familiar lines which an old aunt used to quote to me,

'I love twenty,

And could adore

As many more;

There's nothing like a plenty.'

But as an American author says, 'Though the moon sees many brooks, yet the brook sees but one moon.' And it makes a great deal of difference, whether you happen to be a moon or a brook. And I really think that the humble, steadfast brook has the best of it. I grant that, to a candid mind with a cultivated sense of beauty, a great many young ladies will appear equally charming and agreeable, and it becomes an invidious office to make a selection; and if a man tells me that he veritably believes that he has secured the Rose of the World for himself, well, I honour him for his devotion, but I set him down as an idiot. But then all the moral qualities come into play at this point. When a man has settled

his roving fancy in one direction, there he should abide from every consideration of tenderness, loyalty, and chivalry. That is an unstable, worthless nature that is lured away by the next fair face, because for a moment he thinks that it is a shade fairer than the one familiar to him. And I do not deny that these men, of whom I have known several, and whose phizzes adorn this book, who deliberately lay themselves out for a series of twenty years' flirtations, get through a great deal of time very pleasantly, and with an amount of variety of which a poor beggar of a Benedict can form no conception; yet I do assert that there are moral feelings sweeter even than of victorious love, of which they, in fact, have no conception, and that, though the clouds are held back through their long bright day, yet they gather very swiftly and very darkly towards the evening; and the heart that loves constantly, even though it should have to break in the process, has perhaps a not unhappy lot after all, if we could take the true measure of such things.

I keep the photographs of these two girls because they remind me of an amusing adventure in days when adventures were possible to me. I was, when a senior student, at the famous museum of a great city, and I espied there a perfect lout of a very junior student, whom I regarded with some amount both of dislike and contempt, but who did me the honour of looking upon me, in virtue of my seniority, with a considerable amount of positive veneration. To my astonishment this satyr was accompanied by two nymphs than whom Oreads and Dryads were not more charming, to whom he was idiotically attempting to explain the objects of more prominent interest. I advanced with an air of easy affability towards my Boeotian acquaintance and grasped his hand warmly, I may even say affectionately. Alleging an acquaintance with the museum, I am sorry to say, more close and accurate than was really the case, I volunteered to become their cicerone. When knowledge failed invention came to my

aid; any unknown picture was unhesitatingly assigned to Cyp or Claude; a chance end of a rope, which I richly deserved myself, was extemporised into the cord which was tied round the neck of Eustace St. Pierre, the patriotic burgher of Calais; and a mere arrow into that which pierced the eye of Philip of Macedon. The maidens had pretty heads, but marvellously little in them, or they would have detected my flagrant impostures. When the hour for closing came, the young ladies included me in the invitation to their friend to come home to a tea-dinner. I had just managed to have a few words of conversation with the loon, and he had told me that they were two twin orphan girls, lately come of age, who had just come up to the city to take possession of a house and property left them by an aunt. The two sylphs, the moke and myself, got into a fly and drove off, but I did not catch the address. It was a pretty detached villa, with a pleasant garden around it, and the Miss Maclagans treated us with the utmost hospitality, and played and sang delightfully. At nine o'clock the natural took his leave, making some idiotic remark about having to play a game of whist at some man's rooms. In about an hour I also departed, being fortunate enough to carry away this portrait as a *souvenir* of a very pleasant evening. But now comes the oddest part of the adventure—that I never saw any of those people again. I went out a few days afterwards to pay a morning call, but I was utterly unable to identify the place. All the houses had a uniform appearance, pretty villas surrounded by trim gardens, but no Misses MacLagan were anywhere discoverable. There were one or two houses now empty, and it might have been at one of those, or a stupid servant may have only known the house as belonging to the defunct aunt, or the young ladies may have thought that they had acted imprudently, and so have stopped matters by this process of mystification. If it had not been for this photograph I should have thought the whole affair a dream.

I never set eyes on that imbecile of a junior student again; but I saw a queer account of a suicide that might have been his. A man, with his clothes on, deliberately walked into a river. 'Halloo, master,' shouted a working man, 'dost thee want to drown thyself? There bain't two feet of water there.' 'Where is it deep enough?' answered the man. 'Wal,' answered the countryman, treating it all as a high joke, 'by yon tree there's the deepest hole in 't river.' 'Thank you,' said the stranger; 'much obliged,' and forthwith pops into the hole and gets drowned. I thought this might have been my interesting young friend who had disappeared, but I never had the curiosity to inquire.

It is very odd to think of the differing destinies that have happened to these young creatures. Here is La Belle Fanny, as we used to call her, who seemed only to live for amusement, flying about to parties, to the opera, to the parks, and the whole round of such things, and now she is settled down in a provincial town, married to a professional man, I am afraid with rather a hard life, but doing her duty nobly in it, and not wasting a thought or a regret on those old days. A very different woman is Julia here. Julia hooked a rich fool for her husband, and by means sufficiently disreputable. She and her mother—a genuine Comparini that mother in the Guido version—invited the golden youth to a champagne dinner. The three sat alone at a round table. The champagne was excellent, Koch *fits* best; and the youth, if he had been dining with a ruler, ought to have put his knife to his throat, for he was a man much given to appetite. Julia was there, in robes very splendid but of extreme lightness, and according to our insular fashion, with bust revealed.

The youth took a full share of champagne and heavier wines after dinner, and then to him, flushed with wine and excitement, came the artless Julia, telling him that coffee was ready, and carelessly hanging over his shoulder with innocent abandon. To these, as they say in the plays,

enter her mother, who clasps her hands and turns up the whites of her maternal eyes, demanding an explanation. Before he was quite sober he was a helplessly-engaged man. He came to me next morning with tears in his eyes, asking me how he could be helped out of the scrape, but in the issue their hold on him proved to be too tight. And these little games are still played in the nineteenth century of our highly-civilised state of society. That's Julia's portrait. Fine girl, isn't she?

Here are a few of my literary friends, Tennyson, Browning, Carlyle. You object that they are public portraits, and wonder why I should include them in a collection that professes to be so particularly private. But let me tell you, my dear sir, that no three of my nearest relations have ever had such influence over me as have had these illustrious men. They haven't got the pleasure of knowing me, but I know them quite intimately in their writings; and feeling under an immense load of obligation to them, I gratefully enrol them among my closest Penates. Now here are some groups. First, a group of school-boys, in days when photographing was fresh. We are in costume as cricketers. It was just after we had beaten the Dimsdale eleven, and then we all had a glorious dinner together in the Castle ruins. We eleven never met altogether again after that day towards the end of the half; but I managed, being adhesive in my attachment, to get nine of the lot on the next page, and five of us in a group, after we had been to Lord's. Two of us had dropped in the way. One was a sweet, angelic boy, another in every respect exactly the reverse, but they are both alike taken. Pass another decade of years, and two more have dropped, and I have not been able to get the photographs of all the survivors, but we have all of us come to our seventh *ludrum*, and so at least are half way home. One of those two passed away lingeringly of a phthisis at Torquay, the other fell suddenly in an Indian massacre. This dear old beard went quite grey,



in consequence of an infinitude of troubles, in the course of a single fortnight. Now there's another fellow I've known, who also in the course of a single fortnight was called to the bar, became bankrupt, married a girl with large property, and dropped into a peerage. And he really appears to me to be looking all the better for this series of vicissitudes.

I have gone through the book now; and indeed it is so dark that at the last I could hardly see. I think I will play over the Pastoral Symphony. In the gloom I almost see kind, tender eyes, almost hear mysterious tones and echoes of

silenced voices. O friends! O dear, lost friends! from all other images I turn to yours, gratefully and remorsefully, wishing I had known and loved you better—wishing that words and acts of mine had always been good and helpful, and in no-wise harmful to you. How sweet and soothing is this 'solemn music!' what supernatural cheerfulness and courage it breathes! Let all be well!

The servant enters with candles, my evening dress is laid out, and I am going to Lady Julia's party? *Telle est la vie.* I lock up my book of photographs, and go off to where I shall meet at least a few of the live originals.

#### AT THE OPERA.

**M**USES! all the Nine inspire me, now, if ever, to be lyrical:

In telling of the Opera, 'tis right that I should sing  
In sweet and flowing fashion, though I've boasted friends satirical

To venture who've entreated me but this one—anything.

At the Opera! the subject seems so very tantalizing,

That, in spite of cruel speeches, I'll attempt it, and rehearse

Its little loves and its lessons, and it shouldn't be surprising

When I cannot boast a singing voice to try and sing in verse.

Never yet has Mistress Fashion set her foot in such a Garden,

Rich with operatic flowers, ripe in histrionic fruit,

Everlasting seem the blossoms, and the fruit can never harden,

For the trees are all enchanted, having music at the root.

Never yet has Goddess Discord been so thoroughly checkmated,

When there's never been a challenge there can hardly be a fight,

For a song—in other seasons—we have anxiously awaited,

Now the season never lingers, there's a song for every night.

Like to Jove, in high Olympus, sits Ardit in the middle

Of a happy heav'n of harmony, or swelling sea of sound,

Tempting tempests from the trumpet, from the fascinating fiddle

Sending winning wails of sorrow, bursts of happiness around.

At the Opera! the overture's a race, and at the starting

Every eye in expectation waits the waving of the wand;

Off! they bound along together like an arrow swiftly darting

From a bow, and then they finish bound together in a band!

Ah! the jewels are resplendent on the necks of alabaster,

And the air with rare exotics round the corridors grows faint;

Lash those horses, solemn Jehu, from the dinner-parties faster

With the duchesses in diamonds and peeresses all paint.

From the stalls and from the boxes grows a flower-bed of beauty,  
 With the rose-cheek and the lily-cheek and golden maiden hair;  
 At the Opera young warriors are punctual on duty,  
 Meeting daughters accidentally with mothers on the stair.

Now the overture is over, and the future Paganini,  
 At a sign from the enchanter, stop the tremble of the bow,  
 For the curtain is uplifted and a voice, it is Mongini's,  
 Stops the drawl of dilettanti and the friskiness of Flo.  
 Listen! 'Titiens the mighty! Listen! Lucca! Listen after  
 To the style of Graziani, and to Santley, you'll rejoice  
 He's an Englishman; and listen! it is Patti, Patti's laughter  
 Is musical, and all melody is still La Diva's voice.

At the Opera! there's music in the intervals of acting,  
 Very dear to Desdemona and to dark Othello too;  
 Who can tell? it may be marriage that the Countess is contracting,  
 If Reginald has riches and if Winifred will woo.  
 Very likely eyes, long parted, meet again and meet too often,  
 Bringing happiness, 'tis likely—just as likely giving pain;  
 Very likely looks, how loving! hearts of adamant may soften,  
 At the Opera that story, very old, is told again.

Listen! there's the rolling organ! baby orchestra! he's grander,  
 Yes, the grandest of the music in the Opera to-night,  
 Something rustles to the eyelids! there, 'tis over! out and hand her  
 To her carriage,—'Right!' they bellow. Off the hat! she's out of  
 sight.

Over now! the music's over, voices hushed and all is ended;  
 Lights are one by one extinguished, very dreary 'tis—she's gone.  
 Come along! how can it matter through what street her carriage  
 wended?

She is dozing—may be dreaming—and at present you're alone!

C. W. S.

### POPPIES IN THE CORN;

OR, GLAD HOURS IN THE GRAVE YEARS.—No. VII.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'THE HARVEST OF A QUINT EYE,' &c.

CRICKET GENERALLY, AND A DAY AT LORD'S GROUND IN PARTICULAR.

OF course I am an Oxford man. I don't say this with any implied disparagement of Cambridge. I only mean that for the man of either University, the feelings, the ideas, the sympathies, the preferences, the associations, are so utterly and entirely wedded (in this case none may forbid the banns) to our particular *alma mater*, that we could not, in our wildest imagination, realize the belonging to her sister, and, always in some measure, her rival. There-

fore, if you are an Oxford man, of course you are an Oxford man: how could it have been otherwise? And *vice versa*, obviously, with Cambridge. The same, too, with the public schools. While at school, and full of its eager emulation, ay, and later, even throughout life, could a Harrow boy conceive the possibility of his being or having been an Eton boy; or the Etonian become in idea a Harrovian; or Winchester change across with

either? No; the three corners of the triangle may seem to us 'much of a muchness,—Cæsar and Pompey very like, 'specially Pompey';—but each, in the mind of its constituent parts, has its special and sacred individuality, and no atom located in one could entertain, as other than an absurd dream, the phantasy of having been incorporated into another. A miniature nationality is this, no doubt; we are apt to fall into societies, wheels within wheels, and to identify ourselves soon with those particularly in which we happen to be spokes, or even nails. There never can be, we are convinced, another so round, or so well greased, as our own wheel. Yet a disinterested observer might contend that really the fellow-wheel did its work about as well, and was not very different in its look. And no doubt this might be well said of those sister wheels which at any rate differ, we may triumphantly say, in the painting—one being pale and one the darkest blue.

And thus you would soon have perceived, as we advance by easy stages, to Lord's ground, that the dark-blue colours are those pinned on my coat. I am, however, yet a month or two away from that goal; and I am meditating a general reminiscent chat about the noblest of outdoor sports.

The noblest of outdoor sports—yes, neither boating nor any other shall win from it this well-deserved palm. Take the science of it; the interest of it, the duration of it, the healthy and manly exercise which it calls forth: the variety of the skill and the study which its different parts present, as the batting, the bowling, the wicket-keeping, the fielding; ay, special excellences required and developed for each place in the field; so that there shall be in England but one point, say, as Julius Cæsar (I write of the past; I am behindhand in cricket knowledge now)—one backstop, as Mortlock; or again, a prince of batemen, as Parr; a king-bowler, as Wisden; or a man pre-eminently good all round, as Caffyn. See the faculties called into play: the quickness of eye, the strength of muscle

and sinew, the precision, the vigilance, the coolness, the judgment—the science, I repeat. Look at the *mind* brought to bear on first-rate bowling, for instance; the special pitch calculated, the particular rise, the subtle swerve, and all with a view to the peculiar batting of the man then in. Mark, again, not only the neat batting, the ease and grace with which bailer, shooter, twister are defeated, and Gibraltar still intact, but consider more deeply the science of it. Now the ball rips along the turf, never ascending towards the hands, far away between two fieldsmen: now lies motionless and dead a yard from the wicket: and then there is the exact clear judgment of the run—the crown of the batsman's skill;—not one lost, yet no half-bred rashness and excitement. Then note the generalship brought into play, and indeed most indispensable, and see the wary captain arranging his field with a view to this or that batting and bowling. And the tyro goes in, gives just the chance that was planned for, and succumbs, while the initiated admire. But it is still better to see the equal skill of the defense triumph over the consummate skill of the attack.

Well, I have yet further praise for this king of games, even as the gentle Izaak Walton could consume page after page in commendation of his loved craft. I shall not, however, to match his particularity, give a disquisition upon the nature of turf in general; the best kind to be chosen for the ground; the method of laying it down, of rolling and keeping it:—and then touch on the differences of trees, the many varieties of the willow, its special fitness for the wood of the bat: with a slight discussion as to the composition and qualities of whalebone, cane, thread, and cobblers' wax;—and then on to the divers species of animals that there be in the world; the preparation of their hides for the making of leather; and which of these so-prepared skins shall best suit the purposes of Dark or Duke. But, pardon, old Walton,—this is the bantion of an admirer of thine.

Avoiding such voluminous treat-

ment of the game, let me go on at once to my next head of praise. And this is that this game is singularly healthy, and free from exceptions which have been taken to what I may call its sister sport, at the Universities, namely, boating. Far be it from me to decry this graceful and manly exercise; but I may praise my own client somewhat at its expense. Besides, then, that I think that cricket excels in the wider range of various powers and faculties called forth by it; besides that the cricket match gives days, while the boat-race gives but minutes of pleasure (and I think this is a consideration, in weighing the two); besides these excellences, there cannot be urged against cricket the objection that—justly or not, I shall not stop to decide—has been brought against rowing, namely, that of excessive exertion, ruinous hereafter to the constitution. I do not think this is a necessary consequence of rowing; I only contend that cricket is free even from the suspicion of it. And with fine rosy boys that are to you as the apple of your eye, *this* consideration also will have its weight.

Moreover, there is one great blemish from which cricket is at least freer than most sports, those, at any rate, which have in them anything of the racing character. And this vice is *betting*. I am not about now to take up the graver objections to this practice—to do so would be considered out of place here—but I take my stand on the slur cast by it (in my opinion) on any sport which in great measure depends on it. And I say that a sport which is worth the time given to it ought to be able to stand alone without such machinery strapped on to it, otherwise it must be a poor boneless affair. What would you think of sherry which was too poor to drink without pouring neat brandy into the decanter: or of ale that wanted gin in it; or of gin that wanted vitriol? These are homely illustrations, but they express what I mean. Now of course people *will* bet upon cricket, as they will bet upon every conceivable contingency whatsoever. You can't keep the possible

or even the probable earwig out of even your whitest rose. But the interest of cricket does not fall through, does not appreciably deteriorate or flag, if the whole betting cancer were cut out of it. There is always the noble manly game, with its own intense excitement and interest of a sound and wholesome kind; not the fevered mouth and stopping heart of the man who sees money in the one scale, and insolvency, rascality, suicide, perhaps, in the other; not the diluted compound of this feeling which one may trace in young girls even and amateur book-makers. Without all this diseased interest, there is enough of hazard and uncertainty, spite of the science and skill of the game, to make (in a critical moment of the match) every ball delivered stop the heart's beating for a moment; every run gained an ecstasy, and that last cut for five that decides the victory a very 'order of release' for the cheers.

Let me see, what does a wise man—no parson, only old Aristotle,—say about betting? As nearly as I remember, he calls it a species of the genus covetousness—covetousness diluted—the genus turned into *negus*, to make an extempore anagram,—but still of the family. And, looked straight in the face, I think it will appear so; nor can I understand that friendship or hospitality which, under any pretence of play or sport, gets its hand into a friend's pocket, and lightens it of what is sometimes not even spare cash. Verily, I'd rather pass some from mine into that of a needy friend, or at any rate go without many things that might be desirable to have—such as dinner or my library,—than supply them in such a sorry way. But then my idea of friendship, of hospitality, of courtesy, may be peculiar. I should, to say no more, consider such a method of replenishing my purse—or filling my glove-box—as essentially ungentelemanly or unladylike. Enough.

*'Thou comest in such a questionable shape  
That I will question thee.'*

But the shadow is gone, and I am a man again; and free to give my thought to the grand game.

What right have I to talk of it so much? Am I a cricketer now? a cricketing parson? Far be such an imputation from me; had I the inclination, care for my influence for good over my people must forbid its indulgence. But was I ever a good cricketer? and can I, in memory, fight old well-fought battles and campaigns over again? Not even this. No; I will let you, kind reader, into my secret. I had certain younger brothers whose prowess in the cricket-field was the subject of my complacent satisfaction, and whose talk, during the cricket season, was scarcely of aught else but the game. Indeed they were cricket-mad. So at that time, with very little effort, I was well up in not only the game, but the names and special qualifications of the players of the day, professionals and gentlemen; could have almost passed a moderate examination on the subject. Without knowing them, sometimes even without having seen them, we conceived fervid admiration or rooted dislike towards certain of the players; and each of our fraternity, indeed, had his special pets. *Caffyn* and *Julius Cæsar*—I think these were mine; and I remember that one of my brothers conceived a violent furor for *Sherman*, then the Surrey bowler, and would presume to uphold him against the majority of our fraternity, who, with the rest of the world, were *Wisdenites*. But then, had he not seen and talked with him at his own house at Mitcham? and this, in that cricket-charged atmosphere, was held much such an honour as now a personal acquaintance with Tennyson or Browning would be. Especially before we ourselves excel in any pursuit, what demigods the adepts in it appear to us! For it is notorious that the young are prone to hero-worship.

And my brothers were not at first adepts. They hung fire, so to speak, a little. We were of sufficient number to be companions without seeking external supply; and perhaps too much (being also prone to stick together) confined our sports to our own lawn and fields. And, when it happened that we frater-

nised with a school in the village, and got ourselves chosen into their Wednesday afternoon games, we (being elder) were so *facile principes* that we learned to think rather well of our play, and indeed soon were shut out of the game in which we had begun always to take the lion's share of the fun.

It was just then that we were urged to join a neighbouring club, at which it was our lot to find our level, and to become no longer heroes flushed with victory—the Achilles, and Ajax, and Diomed of the field—but rather raw recruits, in need of the elements of drill. And for a while we sung very small upon the tented field: were misprized on the practice days: were shut out of the matches. Well, well, I myself found out, in process of time, that, for many reasons, my suitable place in the cricket-field was on the spectators' bench, and that I was out of my ground if I was far from my study chair; and that my fielding was better done if it were done alone, wandering through bobbing clover and broad-leaved wheat. So I yielded the point and gave them the slip, and set a long stop to my bowling. But I used to remind those brothers of mine, when better days came upon them, and they had warmed to the work, and were valued members of the club, of how indeed I had been the earliest trainer that they had had, and of how time was, when I was wont to take the three of them, and at last resign the bat, some ten years or so before they came out and I retired. There are few triumphs more delightful than to shine out a hero when you had been thought a 'muff'—and did not I share half the delight of that triumph, when I received a letter from one of these lightly-held brothers of mine, giving the details of a match in which, out of sheer desperation for want of men, he had at last been included? I suppose that, steadily and unnoticed, he had been practising his defence; at any rate I know he took me and every one else by surprise. No one, it appeared, was willing to go in first on our side, and accordingly the Captain sent him in. And there he

stayed, long, and wary, and impregnable, not hitting much, but gradually creeping up to the score of the day; seeing wicket after wicket fall, but still, long, steady, scarlet as to his flannel shirt, killing the bowling, and knocking off the bowlers: carrying his bat out, at last, in a perfect ovation of his amazed allies. Another brother had done well: and one more had fallen into that steady style which he has since never quitted. First ball, four; second ball, six; third ball, out! A short life and a merry one.

Oh, those old cricketing days! I was always a keenly-interested spectator, and even now, on those rare occasions,—once, perhaps, in two years,—on which I see a good match, feel that I can hardly have a greater treat. How pleasant the sunny summer afternoon, at dear old Oxford, when, over-persuaded by the merry and genial band, I should one day mount the drag that rattled along over Magdalene bridge, and towards Cowley meadows. The exhilaration of the day, of the scene, of the company: what company, for the old true gay heartedness, is ever like that now grave-grown Oxford band; the chosen few, the friendly many? And the schools were left behind; what matter now if there still lurked a passage or two in Homer or Æschylus in which a subtle examiner could stump us? We find it easy at such a time to think the best even of examiners, and to hope that they will rather exercise their pains in ascertaining what we know, than, with misdirected ingenuity and indecent curiosity, labouring to discover what we don't. Give them the benefit of the doubt at least; and take in the gladness of an idle day when we are young. 'Tis then, and then only, that we really enjoy them. We get out of the way of merely enjoying life when we age or begin to age. How we revel in our holidays, in boyhood, in youth! Retired from business: that, perhaps we think, must be the intensity of delight; life's drudgery all over, a time of all holidays. So the schoolboy dreams: so even the University man, expect-

ing a time when examinations shall be over, and examiners sink into the rank of mere ordinary fellow mortals, instead of sitting, as we deem of them:

'On the hills like gods together, careless of mankind,  
For they lie beside their nectar, and their bolts are hurled  
Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are lightly curled  
Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming world:  
Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands.'

So even children (I mused in my nursery to-day), so even children would waive the solid portion of the dinner and have it all pudding. And like them we want the pudding first, in youth; at least it seems as though to have it would be delightful; all holidays; no meat: 'no sats to the jama.' But when we are grown old, and may now at our will have all pudding,—lo, often, our taste for pastry has gone! And sometimes the patient plodding horses, out of harmony with the sunny meadows about which they used to race as colts, have petitioned even to be taken back to the mill again, and to surrender that perplexing wealth of time upon their hands. How well and charmingly Charles Lamb paints the picture which I have etched, in his 'Superannuated Man.' Too busy through life to have holidays, and out of gear for them when they come, 'not single spies but in battalions:' this seems strange and sad.

'Our hearts are dough, our heels are lead,  
Our topmost joys full dull and dead,  
Like balls with no rebound:  
And often with a faded eye  
We look behind, and send a sigh  
Towards that merry ground.'

But just now we are, in my pleasant reminiscent thought, rattling down the High, it is a lovely day; the yellow-gray of St. Mary's spire, the dark mass of University, the full elms of Magdalene College, and the tall pensive tower that sometimes thinks aloud in the most mellifluous of bell-language: these are left behind, and soon the white tents appear on the field, and the spots of white and of colour that are cricketing there already. And our hearts are gay



and blythe, and we are in tune for the day and the game.

'Meanwhile the bees are chanting a low hymn;  
And lost to sight th' ecstatic lark above  
Sings, like a soul beatified, of love.'

A sweet joyous summer day; a day to be enjoyed heartily while it is present, and to be pleasantly remembered when it is of the past. And behold! for once I have quitted my seat on the benches, and am found clad in harness and somewhat flurried, as I find myself traversing the sunny green sward that lies between the tent and the wicket, bat in hand, leg encased in whalebone and padding, india-rubber centipedes making my fingers grotesque. I hope I shall save my duck's egg, at any rate, for I have a strong aversion to looking a fool; but they would have me join in this day's game, or college match. Guard is given, the field grows attentive, the bowler retires, poises, and advancing delivers the swift-flying ball, unscathed it passes me; but no crack of stumps is heard. A reprieve. Again, and here cautious treatment of the ball lays the patient dead at my feet. Another reprieve. Perhaps I may survive until I get my eye in. But again: and seeing this ball well to the off, and in his hurry, quite forgetting to think about my bails, I became courageous, and succeed actually in persuading him to post off and fetch me three runs from a far corner of the field. Over! I am then to face the other bowler. This is hard, he may have his own special tiresome peculiarities; and I was getting, if I fancied, a little more at home with the first. The sort of quadrille that the changing over appears to the ignorant had ended: again the field was rigid. What a pace! Well, happily he wasn't straight. Nor the next, and here now comes the third right at my leg. Courtesy dictates the quick step aside, and a sanguine temperament suggests the wild sweep of the bat which follows or accompanies the movement. Hurrah! that caught him, and just threw him out of the line of the expectant long stop, and with just that slight pat of encouragement he ran so far that my score was increased to seven. A

comfortable little sum to retire upon, at least insuring competency and respectability; still, I should keenly enjoy a double number. Yes, and here comes, surely, a half volley; I step forward, flushed with success.

'Yes, let me make my dream  
All that I would!'

I 'let out' at the missile; I catch it well in full career: I already see the seven a ten, when oh!—but let me draw a veil over the painful end. Was it of malice preposse that the bowler gave me that ball? Did he foreknow that I should so smite it? a cold-hearted monster! I could have wished it red hot, as it sweetly sailed into the welcoming hands of long field off, who, of course, had neither the delicacy nor the courtesy to miss it. So I retired upon my small income, not disgraced, if not glorious.—Happily, I instinctively felt, for my respectability, we had not time for another innings.

Well, I enjoyed the day, and I have enlarged upon my experience because it is indeed a contrast to that which would most commonly be set before the public, and there are many, like myself, fond of cricket, but no cricketers, who will hail a brother in me, and half pensively, half smilingly, recognize upon this page their own experiences, anxieties, sweet moments, and despairs. I rather pride myself on the word with which I label the feeling of the much-doubting batsman as he finds himself still in possession after the passing of each ball. It is to him a series of *reprieves*: now an unlooked-for gleam of success: a dawn of hope and confidence: a moment's pang: and then he is sitting in front of the tent in a tender glow or gloom. The class of unsuccessful aspirants is, in all departments of merit, a large class, and, I think, a class deserving perhaps more sympathy and kindly consideration than it gets. The baffled lover; the would-be author; the muff at cricket:—

'There have been vast displays of critic wit  
O'er those who vainly flutter feeble wings,  
Nor rise an inch 'bove ground.'

Yet truly there is real pain in the mortification and defeat which fol-

low upon unsuccessful effort that was real and conscientious and sincere, in any race of which fame was the crown—a leafy crown, a crown that fadeth away, but a passionately sought prize to the young heart, that knows that success is noble, but has yet to learn that greatness may be wrought out of well-employed failure. Hear one of the young fellows—

‘O Fame! Fame! next grandest word to God!

I seek the look of Fame! Poor fool!—so tries

Some lonely wanderer ‘mong the desert sands  
By shouts to gain the notice of the Sphinx,  
Staring right on with calm eternal eyes.’

That may be a little ranting; but don’t oppose to it, you elder men with practical heads, a coarse, shoppy vulgarity. Don’t you know that God has so ordered His world that the blossom comes before the fruit?

But all this may sound too serious treatment for mere cricket failure. Well, I don’t know: there is a certain fame and glory in cricket; and he wins for the time a place in the Pantheon who has, off his own bat, pulled the match out of the fire, and finds himself carried round the ground by a crowd of frantic devotees. I knew, at any rate, a man at Oxford who certainly gave up his first class in moderations, and fell into the second rank, from being unable to withstand the lure of being possibly made bowler of the University Eleven. Just the few important finishing days of reading had to be surrendered to the preliminary matches and trials: and the hero at Lord’s, before whose cunning balls fell many a Cambridge wicket, found, when the class-list appeared, that he had indeed paid for one distinction by loss in another. I wonder whether he regrets his choice. So much, however, for the love of honours in the cricket-field.

Well, but I promised to walk with you to Lord’s ground, to see the great Oxford and Cambridge match there. I cannot describe this year’s; while I write I am, as I said, a month or two from that, so I shall turn back the leaves of the

past until I come to one specially marked page in my cricketing experience.

I happened to be staying, together with my wife, near London, just at the time of the match, and I determined that we would make two days’ holiday of it, and that she should go with me to see the contest and all its gay surroundings. For a country parson and his wife these little affairs, which to you Londoners are such matter-of-course things—these little treats which break the usual routine of the quiet life, are important epochs. We have this advantage, among others, over you, however, that we enjoy small things as though they were large, and large things twice as much as you can do. And this expedition was, of course, one of the great treats. How delightful in the first place, of itself almost worth the journey, the travelling, and going through London with your wife *without luggage!* What country parson will not enter into this felicitation? for seldom do we go for light excursions; generally it is a heavy concern, a ‘move’ in miniature; children and nurse, and trunks and bags, and hampers and portmanteaus—a chapter of anxieties and of petty warfare with cabmen and railway porters, who won’t attend to *you* when you want them, and when there is just, and only just time to catch the other train, and so avoid a two hours’ waiting at the dull station.

Besides this enjoyment we had that of a fine day, which, again, is of itself almost enough to make an outing successful. And I am fond of being in London, or passing through it, outside an omnibus or in a Hansom cab, on a fine day. The country, of course, for a permanency; but yet undoubtedly the town has its colour, its lights and shadows, its composition, its nameless unticketed charms, when the sun is shining on a June day, and Londoners are sighing for the country. But, having the country always, we denizens of it think such a day not wasted in town, and glean many beauties from the streets and squares. Nor only

on such days: nor only in day itself. Here is a bit that I saved, and thought worth saving, out of a country newspaper, which gives the beauty of the city at night:—

'I love to see the quiet dignity  
With which, when work is done and night  
draws on,  
And all the din of footsteps dies away.  
It shakes from off its flanks the ebbing tide  
Of busy life, slips off the glare of day,  
Wraps round its walls the mantle of the Past,  
And settles back to its historic calm,  
As if no break divided its long rest.'

In short, we enjoyed the very journey, which, however, ended duly, and we soon found ourselves denizens of the only two seats (as it would almost appear) that were unoccupied. A new scene to my wife! The immense hoop, 'like a (double) rainbow fallen,' the colour, and the movement, and the numbers that every moment swelled. But soon after we arrived the men began to prepare for commencing the game; and we eagerly scanned the lithe, often stalwart and graceful forms that wore the dark or light blue cap. Cambridge was, I believe, expected to win; and we looked askance at the ranks of the foe; of course we had bought a card with the names, and my wife intended to score, but we knew not the men by sight, hardly by reputation, so out of the cricketing world were we. Soon, however, I gathered, piecemeal and here and there, intelligence concerning the prowess of this or that champion, and of one or two I knew the fame. The captain of the Oxford Eleven, for instance, had but lately signalized himself by a score, I think, of 100, in some great match. And now it was pleasant, while the men sauntered about, or leant against the posts of the pavilion, to survey the many faces that passed and repassed about and behind us, and now and again to recognize some familiar Oxford face, often appearing from the strange clerical garb yet that seemed natural somehow,—I suppose from one's own familiarity with one's self in it—although it made a change in the look of the men that used to swing with easy stride down towards the boats, or to mount the drag to

Cowley, in all coats, and hats with every coloured ribbon.

But the preliminaries were settled: the toss won: and the first men (Oxford) in. Alas! my wife has vainly sought for the carefully, too carefully, kept card; else might I have borrowed the Homeric strain; have given a list of the chiefs, who first who last went to the battle, and how this and that triumphed or fell, not from crashing spears, but from crafty shooters: not from rending crags, but from ripping balls. It may not be: but few of their names even can I remember. Let me give a general idea of the progress of the fight.

The men were placed: guard given: several thousands expecting the first ball. Let me hasten to relieve excitement by stating that, to the best of my recollection, it was a maiden over, and that about the beginning of the match a certain flatness prevailed. It was really quite long, I fancy, before the telegraph marked ten; and I employed the opportunity in careful explanations, not then first begun, to my wife.

In vain, perhaps you say: for how can a woman possibly understand cricket? I reply that if she does not, the fault is in her teacher. To begin, you have to clear her mind of a hopeless muddle concerning the whole intents and purposes of every man in the field. This is begun, and half ended, by simply impressing and emphasizing this broad fact: that the two batsmen are, throughout the innings, the sole representatives of the one side, and that every other player on the field is occupied in the endeavour to get them out. This understood, the nature and reason of the 'over,' another great puzzle, may be well instilled; and the quadrille to which this episode gives rise among the men reduced to simplicity, by just explaining how the altered direction of the ball must necessarily alter the places of those who are waiting to stop or catch it, and how those posted at the long distances change posts as well as places to save time and peregrination. This much premised, the ground will be cleared of

wilderness, and you may then answer questions, which will soon become intelligent enough, and you can put in your drills of regular information. It is your own fault if there be not soon full enough idea of the great game to permit an intelligent appreciation of it, and close interest in it. Quickness of understanding is the last thing in which women are deficient: the power of weighing opposite considerations judicially and impartially; the power of reasoning logically; the power of following out a thing to its consequence or to its source, with the close patience of a sleuth-hound—these are her deficiencies, and for these her education—or want of it—rather than the character of her mind is accountable. This by the way. *My* pupil, at any rate, was apt; and soon she could, and did, enter most heartily and thoroughly into the meaning and spirit of the game. This was well, for it would have been a huge disaster, if no interest in the play had been aroused, to have taken her for a whole day's dose of watching it.

By this time two wickets were down, and the score sluggish in the extreme. I longed for a little warmer work; but the bowling was evidently not to be trifled with, and the batsmen played a careful game. Behold, however, another vacancy: and now a lithe, middle-sized man, with the dark-blue cap pressed down above his (it seemed so far as we could see) dark, good-looking face, stepped, bat in hand, from the pavilion. I asked his name. 'Maitland.' Full of excitement, I announced to my wife the presence at the wickets of the Captain; and hurriedly again declared his exploits of late, and promised that at last the spell should be broken, and the fours and fives fly about the field. Eagerly and intently we watched, as the swift ball left the bowler's hand: would it go for six? or would he be content with just a two or three to begin? How utterly blank we looked, as—yes, it was a reality: the stumps behind that redoubtable bat were scattered hither and thither. *He* could afford it, however, but Oxford hardly could, and we felt

so sorely dashed. The chief sustained his reverse with the same quiet dignity with which he would have carried success. I always admire the bearing of these chieftains as they calmly seek the pavilion under a hail-storm of clapping, or a sympathetic silence that would be applause if it could. Well did the Captain, let me remark here, retrieve this fall, next day, in the second innings: and much did we exult in his success. Things, however, at present looked ill for the dark-blue colours; and although a stand was made at the end by the less powerful batsmen, yet I think the Oxford score did not exceed some eighty or ninety. It was evidently all over with them, for there were some tremendous batsmen on the Cambridgeside. We mournfully discussed some sandwiches and bitter ale between the rival innings.

'Twere long and tedious to dwell in detail upon every phase of the match; even could memory produce sufficient photographs for the purpose. Enough to tell how our languid interest revived, as the experience of Oxford was repeated in the Cambridge innings. Runs most gradually got; and wicket after wicket crashing down. The interest was fully aroused, quickened into excitement; the match seemed recovering its even balance: and though a stand here was made, and the fatal ball arrested, yet I think Cambridge did but head Oxford by some twenty runs; and as many as this were obtained by Oxford in her second innings, without the loss of a wicket, before the day's play closed. Thus the two were once more even: for the entire eleven of Oxford had yet to go in: to begin, as it were, all fresh next day, with twenty runs for a start.

I like to see the fielding in a match like this. It is nearly the prettiest part of cricket. The ball so cleanly taken, and instantly and unerringly sent in; the cautious and instinctive backing up; the coolness and self-possession; the neatness, precision, absence of flurry or hurry: all these things are to me a study. Indeed I remember learning a useful lesson upon which I

have practically acted, from seeing the bearing of a true cricketer upon missing a ball which he should have fielded. The tyro, or the half-bred player, would have lost his self-possession, scrambled and fumbled after the ball, and finished perhaps by kicking it a few yards further on its course, certainly have made a bad shot or two at capturing it. Not so my friend. He just drew himself up for a moment, and let the ball lie: then cool, rapid, certain, swooped upon it, and had it in in a twinkling. And I have applied this example in cases dissimilar in circumstances, but alike in kind: cases, I mean, of making a slip or a mistake. Pause for a moment to collect yourself and to avoid flurry, and then act. Thus, even in the case of public reading, how sometimes you will find a slip or a fault followed by a stammering and confusion, much more disturbing and painful to audience and reader or preacher, than the calm dignified recollection and then the quiet rectification of the error. A curious mode, you may say, of learning elocution. But there are analogies in most things to a mind which has a turn for discovering them.

Well, to end our match. My wife was not only ready, but eager, to visit Lord's next day; and my father also accompanied us, to see the end. When we arrived Oxford was not only in, but, in considerable degree, *out*; and things were looking anything but well for our chances. Still, Maitland's fine innings cheered us a bit, the more because of our jealousy for his reputation, in which all Oxford men seemed part proprietors. Something like one hundred

the innings closed for, not enough by some decades at least. And the Cambridge score crept up, not brilliantly, but quietly; even to the last the interest continued; for, if I remember right, there were yet ten to get with the last man in but one; and before this was obtained, the last man was facing the bowler. The excitement was intense as the ball sped on its voyage of discovery, and the cheers rung out, when a clean and gallant cut secured the match for Cambridge.

'Alas! that Oxford men should sing  
The combat where her colours fell;  
That Oxford hard should wake the string,  
The triumph of her foes to tell.'

Yet so it was: and I can't help it; nor am I sure that if I could I would. At the time, of course, one's sympathies are strongly enlisted, but when it is over, so long as it was a good fight, and that the Universities have kept fairly even in the whole list of matches, we do not grudge the victors their well-earned triumph.

So, well pleased, we returned home, and retained a pleasant memory of the eager play, the blue canopy (that would wear Cambridge colours) above it all, the smooth green sward, the great circling crowd; some sweet girl-faces with the dark or the light blue garb; some faces dear through old friendship, and pleasant to be seen again, and last, some faces of other chieftains besides those of cricket; chieftains in Art, in Literature, &c., who had been pointed out to us, and who are certain to be seen there on that great day when Oxford meets Cambridge on the tented field.



## WHO WINS?

## A Lay of the River.

WHO wins? They're off! and bending  
 Their blue blades and their backs;  
 The pace! the pace! is mending,  
 And horsemen spur their hacks.  
 Put out the blue in bunting!  
 Shine blue dear women's eyes!  
 Look blue at steamers hunting  
 The crews that women prize.  
 Young oarsmen on the river,  
 Pedestrians on pins,  
 Shout, Oxford! Cambridge! give her  
 Your muscle, boys! Who wins?

There's not a foot between them!  
 From Putney left behind  
 The cheers of those who've seen them  
 Float on the Easter wind.  
 Old Oxford plods machine-like,  
 Dark Oxford, Isis-bred,  
 But faster now and queen-like  
 Light Cambridge gets ahead!  
 Cheer, Cambridge! who can wonder?  
 The turn of luck begins,  
 Here's Hammersmith! and under  
 First! What a roar! Who wins?

From balcony and basement,  
 From lawns that kiss the stream,  
 Cheer from the cosy casement  
 Where idle lovers dream;  
 Sing for the men of mettle  
 Who battle for the blue,  
 Reserve the roses' petal  
 Maidens! on bosoms true.  
 Then when the struggle closes  
 We'll empty out our bins,  
 And you shall give the roses,  
 And eyes shall say who wins.

Sigh, for the pluck defeated!  
 Weep, for the baffled strength!  
 The old tale is repeated,  
 And Oxford leads a length.  
 Why, fickle maid, Fortuna,  
 To Cambridge never cling?  
 There's Henley yet, and June a  
 Sweet victory may bring.  
 When Cam is widened double,  
 The sluggish Cam, whose sins  
 Have brought her children trouble,  
 We'll tell you then who wins.

Who wins? say, Carolina,  
 And Isabel, you quiz,  
 If dark or light between a  
 Vast difference there is?





THE END OF THE RIVER

WHO WENT

A LONG OF THE RIVER





[Drawn by Horace Stanton.]

WHO WINS?  
A LAY OF THE RIVER.

I hunt such words, tabling definitions. 'I ang' who bro' can the new mile low com der. Lad Mrs uni fem my lent cre and stri fort her par me kno for cert in v goo cre are the ness if n frie follo ' W Cou

If both could be the winners  
 All eyes might then be bright,  
 For dark are saints and sinners,  
 And loved and bated light.  
 Wave kerchiefs for your brothers!  
 Sing for your kith and kin,  
 Pour pity on the others,  
 But let the best men win!

CLEMENT SCOTT.

### A MODEL MARKET.

I WAS once amused and scandalized by hearing a misogynistic humorist contend that there is no such being, and never was in this world any such being, as a charitable woman. He was careful to define and explain his meaning in the use of the adjective. Said he, 'I know about the ministering angel, and all that. I know that when pain and anguish wring the brow it is woman's hand alone that can exhibit the tasteless gruel and the nauseous draught with a gentleness that equalises flavour, and mildly compels the patient to swallow both abominations, without complaint or querulous and shuddering protest. I know that the Lady Bountiful of fiction and the Mrs. Fry of reality find a just and universal acceptance as the types of feminine benevolence. I know that my good old grandmother—excellent lady—led a wretched, wandering creature out of the wintry wind, hail, and sleet, down a dark gateway, and stripped off her own warm and comfortable garments to part them with her forlorn sister, as St. Martin parted his cloak with the naked mendicant. Oh, yes, to be sure, I know thus much, and more too; but for all that, I am as certain as I am certain of anything that true charity in womankind does not exist. The good deeds of all these delicate creatures, as Othello calls the ladies, are trammelled with conditions. In their charity is much uncharitableness.' Having spoken to this effect, if not in these very words, my friend paused and then made the following remarkable concession: 'Well, I grant you Miss Burdett Coutts; she is quite exceptional;

and if you challenge me I'll show you that she proves my rule.'

I did not challenge him. I stopped my ears against his profanity. I said, 'Avaunt, comic but cold-blooded woman-hater!' I felt that the name he had uttered was not a contradiction of female charity, but was rather its affirming head and front. For thousands and thousands who have all the will to do good, and to do it unconditionally, there may scarce be one who is blessed with the means. And it does indeed seem like a special blessing that wealth should come into hands that can bid it go forth again in streams of well-directed mercy. Of a truth, the benefactions of Miss Angelina Burdett Coutts are lessons worth studying in the art of kindness. This art, we may be happily sure, will never be lost while nature survives among us, and men and women continue to be real. But, as an art, it is the better for strict rules, and the worse for wild practice. Systematic, orderly, symmetrical, the kindness of Miss Burdett Coutts is tenfold more effective than it would be if it were merely a spontaneous outflow, altogether destitute of organization or any sensible sign of a plan. Miss Coutts would seem to have mastered the very architectonics of charity.

The driver of the Hansom cab number nine thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine, hailed in Piccadilly by this present writer, on the twentieth morning of the month of March last past—as unpleasant a morning as might be, with the barometer backing to stormy, and umbrellas going up like Bank Stock—looked uncertain when told to drive to

Crab Tree Row, Bethnal Green. The rain streamed from the peak of his hat, and from the stiff shiny channels of his black oilskin covering, as he bent down to receive sailing orders. He gave himself a dog-shake, showering raindrops to the rain, and his wet face plainly said, 'This 'ere job ought to be double the reg'lar fare; but I ain't likely to get it.' A Hansom on a rainy day is not a triumphal car, nor a coach of state, nor, in any vehicular likeness, a pleasant thing to ride in. As they build London Hansoms smaller and smaller, space for your knees there is none; and the sense of dampness in those joints is increased by the tight stowing. You must have the glass down or you must have it up; and the choice of evils is a desperate case of heads-or-tails. The infernal machine which guillotines your hat, or grazes the bridge of your nose, leaks at the folding joint, and lets in the muddy water fitfully. The overhanging ridge of the hinged division thrusts its obnoxious peak into your chest; and you are soon stifled with your own breath. Knowing these miseries by doleful experience, you elect perhaps to have 'the glass up.' Then you must protect yourself with your open umbrella if you would avoid the splashes of many hoofs, met in your slushy progress. I had ample time to study the demerits of either plan as I journeyed that day from St. James's to the remote parish of St. Leonard, Shore-ditch. Crab Tree Row is a thoroughfare leading from the Hackney Road, eastward to Bethnal Green; and in Crab Tree Row Miss Burdett Coutts has builded a market-place which will have been formally opened when these pages are in the hands of the reader. It is a part of a large and growing scheme of beneficence begun by her some years ago, and changing, day by day, the sorrowful aspect of this poor faubourg. The rainy 20th of March was the appointed date of a meeting within the bounds of the newly-finished market. Miss Coutts had invited the Metropolitan Board of Works to inspect the market buildings, and to concert with the committee of ma-

nagement such plans for the general improvement of the neighbourhood as might seem requisite and practicable. There were a few guests not officially connected with the government of King Thwaites; and I was one of them. From what I then saw and heard I shall now, with the aid of notes and drawings which are before me, endeavour to describe Columbia Market.

The Gothic quadrangle of two acres had the appearance of being, as it was, uninhabited and unfurnished; or I could have fancied that I stood, with English weather wrapping me coldly about, in the market-square of a French or German city. In the innocent art-prattle of Mr. Beresford Hope, mention is frequently made of the 'sky-line' as a special beauty of good domestic architecture. The 'sky-line' of Columbia Market only wanted a sky. Perhaps those chimneys on the ridge of the steep high roofs were a trifle too formal and heavy for their situation, and were hardly consistent with the pointed windows below. But there were projections and pinnacles enough to break any level monotony of the two-and-two semi-detached-villanous infusion of 'style.' Mr. Darbishire has a true feeling as to what roofs should be like, and he is one of the architects to whom we look for a restoration of the good old gable-ends and the comfortable quaintnesses of Tudor-Gothic. It is rarely that any group of buildings raised together on a plan, instead of being the fruit of time and time's necessity, fulfils the conditions of the picturesque so well as does the snug little nest of labourers' dwellings called 'Holly Village,' near Miss Coutts's lodge at Highgate. When a little of the newness shall have got rubbed off the edge of this 'loved masonry,' when the prim paths shall begin to show wear and tear; when the negligence and neatness of home shall be in accord, and the ease of custom shall overgrow like ivy the stiff precision of strangeness, a prettier spot than Holly Village will be sought in vain near London. The design of Holly Village and the design of Columbia Market are from the same hand. In



fact, Mr. Darbshire is architect-in-chief to Miss Burdett Coutts, who selects the ablest aids for the accomplishment of her benevolent ends, and who has been even more than usually happy in the formation of a board of control for her new market. Her secretary, Mr. John Hassard, who is also secretary to the Archbishop of Canterbury, having served Dr. Tait in the same capacity while that excellent divine was Bishop of London, is a member of the committee in question, at whose head is Mr. Edmund Johnson, a Middlesex magistrate and a man of noted capacity in the management of large and complex affairs. He has estimated the returns upon capital expended by Miss Coutts, in the erection of this market-place, at five per cent. for the first year, and from that amount to ten per cent. in years to come. Miss Coutts, then, looks for interest on the money she places to the account of philanthropy? Yes, it is even so; and by-and-by we shall have to consider this point, our present business being with the market-place itself.

In the wretched rain, interior views were more agreeable than the sight of outer walls, however sightly. But the external architecture, nevertheless, commanded our notice that day before we looked within. A gate-house three storeys high is the central object in the south front, which gives upon Crab Tree Row. Long arcades on either side connect this building with the east and west flanks of the market. A lofty archway forms the principal approach to the enclosed square, and this archway is adorned with ornamental gates of hammered iron, the work being that of men in the employment of Messrs. Cubitt and Co., the builders. The market-office is on the first floor of the gate-house; and the clerk of the market will have his residence in the rooms above. The arcades of the south front will accommodate a class of dealers not requiring the use of shops. Like the lofty centre arch, they are guarded with folding iron gates, the whole line being honest hammer-work that does a man's eyes good to look upon. Those persons who take an

interest in local comparisons of skilled labour, and who are sufficiently expert to distinguish nice differences of merit, may find in the northern range of buildings, to be presently described, other gates of wrought iron, which are from Birmingham forges, the south gates being, as I have said, the production of London handicraft. It is fortunate for a principle if these examples of metropolitan art-work are the best. I hope they are; though I must confess my inability to decide by technical judgment one way or the other.

Before we go on with our inspection of the place, it will be well that we take with us some knowledge of the needs which it is intended to satisfy. Four classes of dealers will assemble here. The first or lowest class will be that of the hawkers and costermongers, those poor caterers of the poor, who live from hand to mouth by selling to those who can barely do as much. The second class of dealers will be such as rent stalls under cover, and not in the open square. The third class will be shopkeepers, but only shopkeepers; and the fourth will be shopkeepers whose shops have dwelling-places attached to them.

Now, for the hawkers the accommodation is simple. They will bring their barrows into the uncovered place, either to carry away provisions which they may purchase wholesale, or to remain and drive a retail trade. The next grade of merchants will find room in the arcades of the south front, which have been already spoken of, and perhaps in other parts of the market, too. The penultimate class, non-residential shopkeepers, are handsomely provided for in the market-hall, of which building I shall have a few words to say presently. Fourth and last are the domiciled tradesmen, whose shops line the east and west sides of the quadrangle.

Looking northward across the open place, paved with bluish granite, which is divided by red lines into squares of six feet, and centrally adorned with the useful ornament of a large lamp, surrounded by hydrants and washing basins,

we are struck by the sight of a tall and graceful belfry, rising from the midst of a Gothic roof. This prominent object denotes the principal building—a fine hall, with a groined porch at the base of the *campanile*. It is the market-hall, bounding by its sole length the entire north side of the square. East and west, that is to say right and left as we face the decorative architecture of this pinnacled edifice, are the houses with high-pitched roofs and pointed gables, and a cloistered footway in front of their shops. Flanking these rows, east and west, and forming the two wings of the south front, in Crab Tree Row, are buildings arranged in flats, which are to be let out to City clerks, if City clerks will take them. Nor is this proviso at all unlikely; for the City clerks have been growling, as much as a body so amiable as City clerkship can growl, at their neglected and forlorn condition, saying, 'While ye, O rich and good, are giving wealth and time and care to the amelioration of labouring folks' lodgings, our lodgings are dearer and less comfortable than ever; pray you, therefore, look to it.' City clerks are as honourably independent as any other people; and they are too shrewd men of business to expect boons or gifts merely as boons or gifts. But perhaps they think, with some reason, that riches and intelligence might be profitably busied in the building of homes that would pay better than the ruinously cheap and tawdriy nasty terraces and villas run up by that snob of snobs the 'speculative builder,' who, to the grossest ignorance of the class of hodmen whence he has sprung, usually joins the mischievous cunning that availeth no man, but curseth 'him that gives and him that takes.' If the model lodging-houses founded by Miss Burdett Coutts and such practically kindhearted persons had wrought no other good than the discomfiture of the sordid bunglers who put their pence into the brick-and-mortar traffic, they would have done well.

Externally, we have now seen as much of the market-place as we

care to see through the wet blanket of a cold and rainy day in the middle of March. We might, to be sure, keep beyond the northern boundary of the quadrangle, and we should then see a large, unfinished, and untidy yard, which will, when in order, be a place for the unloading of carts, and for the transaction of wholesale business; and being on that farther side of the hall, we become aware that the new Columbia Market closely abuts on the fine range of lodging-houses built by Miss Coutts's architect, and named Columbia Square; also that there is as much decoration on the outer side of the hall itself as on that part which overlooks the market-place; moreover that there is a tavern for the use of the market people; likewise a coffee-house, rather comfortless now in its bare blank northerly look-out, but capable of being made more attractive; lastly, that there is an opening to cellars which would be invaluable to a wine-merchant in some other part of the town, and may be found very useful here.

It is a pleasant change from the chilly north yard and its bare buildings with its bleak aspect, bleaker now for the excessive inclemency of the weather, to the inside of the great hall; great, I call it, for so it is, considering its purpose and the little prospect there would have been of such a hall being raised here except by private munificence. There is a clear length of one hundred and four feet with a width of fifty; and the height from the paved floor to the top of the groined roof—which by-the-by is of pitch-pine, unusually beautiful in grain and colour—is fifty feet. The ground space, unobstructed by any fixtures or movable furniture, gives an area of two thousand six hundred square feet; and in the aisles, behind the clustered granite pillars which divide the length of the hall into seven bays, are twenty-four small shops, each thirteen feet deep, about seven feet wide, and eight feet high. They are lined with the polished Connemara marble, which is so hard and close of grain as to be the very best material to

insure perfect cleanliness; and they are furnished with sink, counter, and other fittings necessary for the sale of meat, fish, and poultry. These shops, which are supplemented with offices containing each a fireplace and a desk, are in four flat blocks, two on each side of the hall; and thus four platforms or terraces, neatly tiled, will be available for the display and sale of shrubs and flowers. The pine roof has moulded ribs, springing from the capitals of the pillars, which are thirty-five feet high. The Portland stone used in the building of this hall is variously adorned with the beautiful Irish marble already mentioned, with Sicilian marble, and with Aberdeen granite. Light on all sides is gained from large mullioned windows, extending from the galleries to the groining of the roof with which their heads are concentric. Two compartments in each window are furnished with casements, which, by an ingeniously simple contrivance, are made to open outwards, for ventilation. The building has four entrances. I have already spoken of one, the chief entrance, through the deep porch at the base of the belfry and clock-tower. Then there are gates or doors at either end, and one on the north side leading from the outer yard and New Street, Hackney Road.

Now for the questions—Ought a charitable deed, like the founding of this market, to be made a matter of commercial speculation; and, being calculated to pay, will it pay? First, with the first. I do not think that in all cases a tangibly profitable return of the bread we cast upon the waters should be looked for. We should not invariably expect to get it back again, as the Yankee showman said, buttered. I am quite certain, as every man with his eyes open, and his heart tolerably uncantered must be, that thousands and thousands of pounds given by such a true sister of charity as Miss Burdett Coutts, are given without the hope of reimbursement. Yet according to a principle on which the most important of her philanthropic schemes are wrought out, that hope must be

very pleasing to her. The principle is simply this—works that are meant to benefit struggling, but not helpless persons, ought to remunerate the projectors, and are tested by the amount of remuneration. The more they are wanted the better they should pay. It is easy to understand, therefore, how a charitable man or woman, who makes charity a study and a business, should watch with a sort of disinterested greed the financial success of operations purely benevolent in their scope and aim. Then, Will the capital expended in the building of Columbia Market return a fair interest? Will the marbles, and the sculpture, and the wrought-iron foliage, and the peal of fifteen bells in an ornamental turret yield a money return? The answer is plainly, 'No.' But the principle, nevertheless, is vindicated and maintained. There will be, in all reasonable likelihood, a very good profit on the outlay for plain and solid construction, which is covered by the figure 100,000*l.* Beyond this, the decorative work, costing 50,000*l.*, need not be considered. That is Miss Coutts's own affair. Use and beauty are two distinct things; and it would be absurd to think of making poor toilers pay for architectural grandeur and ornament. Still, the expenditure of this large sum of fifty thousand pounds in the adornment of a market-place may not be unprofitable, even in a strictly business-like point of view. Better work makes better workmen; and it is a noteworthy and significant fact that the iron gates of the entrance in Crab Tree Row were hammered into forms of beauty by men who were obliged to have the requisite knowledge and skill hammered into them; for they were previously inexpert at this dignified kind of art-labour. It will be impossible for the coarsest and most ignorant minds to be in constant familiarity with graceful forms without profit of elevation and refinement. So let us leave Columbia Market to its twofold work, hoping that it may help to enforce a wider recognition of the truth that man cannot and should not live by bread alone. G. T.

## THE SPRING CLEANING, AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

MR. WALTON, of the Temple and the Home Circuit, had very pleasant lodgings very close to Hyde Park. The rooms were not very extensive, neither, indeed, was the house, but then the situation was so exceedingly good. Mr. Walton went, or rather he used to go, the home circuit, that being handy and comparatively inexpensive. He had also his name—with a great variety of other names—painted over a door in the Temple; but beneath that door itself Mr. Walton had not passed for years. The law had proved a severe step-mother, not affording him the slightest nourishment; but Mr. Walton had means of his own, and after his first twelvemonth, seeing no immediate prospect of being appointed Solicitor-General, he had virtually abandoned the law. Still he was a barrister of seven years' standing, and was very ready to accept any good thing, of which he had some chance through a powerful connection, which might fall to him as a barrister of a certain standing.

He had fixed upon taking these rooms in Tyburnia as soon as he had set eyes upon them. He had wanted West-end lodgings, and had given up a day or two to that wearisome search. Some landladies were so painfully grand, others so painfully shabby. Sometimes the furniture was good but ancient, and with a general savour of dilapidated horsehair; sometimes it was new and shiny, but cheap and fragile, and as scanty as could be, consistently with due appearance. Everywhere the voice was insincere, the eye-lustre metallic, and the manner wavering between cringing servility and mere impudence. At last he came to this particular house. It was thoroughly homelike. The rooms were furnished very prettily and very fully, the ornamentation elegant, the comforts numerous. Freshness and neatness everywhere, and very admirable. He told himself, and with truth, that he had dropped into a good thing. He would have taken the rooms at once, they suited him so well, and, more-

over, he was quite taken with the quiet, pleasant, ladylike manners of his landlady. It may here also be mentioned, as a fact in the general history, that, on entering one of the rooms, he saw a really beautiful girl bending over some drawing on which she was engaged, who rose when he entered, and dropping a slight but very graceful curtesy, withdrew, which young lady was the landlady's daughter. The circumstance had, however, no other effect upon our Templar than supplying him with the comfortable reflection that it was better to have nice women about him than women who were not nice.

His lodgings were on the ground-floor; that is to say, his sitting-room was the front dining-room. There was a parlour behind, which was one of the rooms which Mrs. Merton, the landlady, occupied for herself. The drawing-room floor was let to a member of Parliament and his wife for a season. On the third floor were three bedrooms, two belonging to the drawing-room, and one to Mr. Walton, with small dressing-room annexed. There were no other lodgers. It is desirable that the geography of the place should be thus far understood.

Mr. Walton would have liked his landlady still better, and her apartments still more, if he had known more about her. He knew it all afterwards. Mrs. Merton's husband had been a surgeon, rather distinguished in his day, as careful and kindhearted as he was clever, and whose reputation, in a difficult department of his profession, still lasted and was likely to last. He was climbing fast into fame and a large practice, and had taken this pretty West-end house, where he had hardly lived two years, when, attending gratuitously a sickly family in a fetid court, he sickened and died. He had not insured his life, and he had saved very, very little for his wife and two children, girl and boy. The widow had hardly anything beyond the lease of the house, which was worth something, and its abundance of handsome fur-

niture. It was her supreme desire that her children should have the education that their gifted father would wish them to have, the boy going into the father's profession, where he would find many friends. The only plan that suggested itself to Mrs. Merton was that she should let off her house into apartments. This was a sore trial to good Mrs. Merton—a sore blow to that decent pride which may have something wrong in it, but, at the same time, is such a help to most of us imperfect people. The dining-room, where friends had so often gathered round their cheerful board; that exquisite drawing-room, overlooking the gay, bright park, in which she had taken such pride, and which was crowded with tokens of her own fair tastes, must be given up to strangers, who would look upon her as a mere hiring, and would know nothing of the ghostly sympathies and associations which cling to such chambers in their vanished joys. But Mrs. Merton thought she saw her duty, and she did it, though with a laceration of heart and feeling which made those who knew her best wonder how she could possibly go through with her daily work. But she was sustained by duty and love, and duty and love, as is their wont, were now bringing their reward. Her eldest boy was walking the hospital at Edinburgh, with the fairest of fair characters, and every hope of attaining to future eminence. Her daughter she had sent to an excellent school, where the worthy schoolmistress, though giving her special pains, had made in her case special reductions. Mabel had now finished her education, and was anxious to begin the world as a governess, while her mother was anxious to keep her at home. And the good mother, amid constant occupation and growing interests, had now regained a full measure of cheerfulness and tranquillity. One of Mr. Walton's family friends, hearing of his whereabouts, told him all about the home and family where he lived.

The most stable institution of the Merton household was that every spring there should be a grand

house-cleaning. Other cleanings there were numerous and vexatious, but the spring cleaning was the greatest institution of all. In some houses there is such a chronicity about cleaning that I verily believe it is simply a vindictive and retaliatory proceeding adopted towards the race of mankind as an ingenious instrumentation of torture to redress any balance of female grievances that might be standing over undressed.

It was now the pleasant spring, Easter-tide, the Easter falling late. The cutting nor-easter had finished its work of cutting and carving at weakly lungs, and old Æolus had bottled up his east wind in his cellar, and had given us zephyrs as a desirable change. Very pleasant was the change to man, and beast, and little fishes. Among its evidences was the grateful fact which Mr. Walton's eye appreciatingly noted, that a slight glass vase of fresh flowers repeatedly adorned his breakfast-table. Sometimes, in that adjacent room, he heard music, soft and low, such as his soul loved. Once, letting himself quietly in with his latch-key, he heard the silvery ripple of a voice in converse, sound hardly less musical. Once, also coming in very quietly from a dinner-party, he heard a magnificent soprano voice in that next room, which was silenced as soon as the arrival was known. When he was at home music did not ordinarily go on in that adjacent room.

One morning, contrary to her custom, Mrs. Merton made her appearance in his room while he was still at breakfast.

'Mr. Smith, the member, sir,' she said, 'is going out of town for his little parliament holiday.'

'Hope he'll enjoy it, Mrs. Merton,' said Walton, with real indifference.

'Gentlemen generally go out a few days at Easter-tide. It brightens them up for the season.'

'Not at all a bad plan,' returned Walton; 'a little change brightens us all up.'

'Pray, Mr. Walton,' said the widow, coming to the point, 'do you intend going away for a few days this Easter?'

'Why, really, Mrs. Merton, I can't say that I am. The fact of the matter is that I had never thought about it.'

Then Mrs. Merton left the room with a somewhat aggrieved and decidedly disappointed air.

The next day, however, she entered his apartment with a braced-up expression of countenance indicative of much mental determination.

'I hope it won't put you out at all, Mr. Walton, but we are beginning our spring cleaning, and we shall want to take up your carpets in a morning or two.'

'Oh dear! oh dear! oh dear!' groaned Mr. Walton, burying his face in his hands. He had been familiar with the affliction from his youth up, and here it was once more facing him in all its horrors.

To Mr. Walton, indeed, the calamity was a real one. We are greatly attached to him, but we must also frankly own that he was generally in much of a muddle. He was a man who had really little or nothing to do, but he persuaded himself that he was the busiest man in London. The phrase *strenua inertia* might have been expressly invented for him. There never was a more pleasant and amiable man. A bit of an artist, a bit of a painter, a bit of a critic and poet, a bit of a mathematician and *savant*, he had gained a smattering, a footing, in many accomplishments and branches of knowledge without attaining to the slightest proficiency. It was fortunate that he had not to gain his living by this *dilettantism*. Perhaps if he had he would have been more energetic and have achieved distinction.

He was the most careless man that could be conceived, his room always in a litter—photographs, stamps, stray silver, water-colour paintings, cards, letters, even jewellery, strewed around. It was not even clear that he took the trouble of reading his letters, and friends who knew him would insist on seeing him and not leaving messages, there was so little chance of his ever attending to a message. To such a man the proposition of clearing out his sitting-room was the

most painful and exasperating that could be imagined. But he was too indolent even to object, but acquiesced in fate and the inevitable personified by Mrs. Merton, only begging that the operation might be put off as long as it could, and then be got over as speedily as possible.

The next morning there was an ominous noise overhead which told him that the devastating work had commenced. Huge pieces of furniture were being dragged about, draperies were hanging over the banisters, windows were flying up, small dust was in the air, suspicious-looking females were carrying buckets upstairs, and the spring cleaning was commenced in real earnest. His bedroom was to be ruined that afternoon, and his sitting-room to undergo the same fate the afternoon following.

That afternoon, when Mr. Walton was out, a gentleman called to see him, and expressed some little annoyance at not finding him at home.

'It is rather important. Can I write him a line?' said the visitor.

The handmaiden said she had no doubt he could, but she would speak to Miss Mabel.

Miss Merton at once asked him into her mother's pretty room, and gave him writing materials. In about a minute he dashed off a short note, and gave particular instructions that it should be carefully delivered to Mr. Walton.

You can bring a horse to the water but you cannot make the noble animal drink. You might lay a note on Mr. Walton's writing-table; you might tell Mr. Walton that there was a note lying on his writing-table; you might point the note out to him, but you could not insure the certainty that Mr. Walton would open and peruse such a note.

There were several little notes lying on his writing-table when he came home. One, pink and perfumed, from a great lady, asking him to a party, was eagerly opened. Mr. Walton looked meditatively at the others, and shook his head at them, and smoked a meditative cigar over them, and concluded that he would open them next day. One or



two of them looked dunnish. Mr. Walton did not overlive his modest income, but a man of his irregularity generally adjusts things badly, and is liable to get dunned.

The next morning Mrs. Merton asked him whether she should help him put his books and water-colour drawings in order before the char-woman came; but Mr. Walton declared his intention of preparing himself in person for the visitation of these harpies.

'The fact is, Mrs. Merton, I don't mind it now. My books and papers want arranging sadly, and this will be a good opportunity now that I am compelled to arrange them.'

The next morning Mr. Walton set his house, or rather his portion of the house, in order; that is to say, he did so according to his lights. He made a glorious litter, and after his manner, meditatively shook his head at it, and smoked a cigar over it. Then he began the work of assorting prints and photographs, which he stopped to gaze on, and of binding up familiar letters which he stopped to read once more. A man does not make much progress in this last sort of work, and it is rather sad work; at least Mr. Walton felt a little depressed. He was two-and-thirty now, and the seven years of his professional life were, he acknowledged to himself, blank and failure. He had not got on, and never expected to get on, at the bar. His 'influence,' the powerful friend who had it, might do something for him, only his 'influence' didn't, and that hope deferred was beginning to make his heart sick. He was sufficiently well off to live luxuriously as a bachelor; but it is uniformly your gentle, luxurious bachelor who is always peopling his fool's paradise with a lovely wife and pretty children. Mr. Walton awoke up from this vein of meditation by discovering that he had not many minutes wherein to complete his preparations. These were made with extreme haste and by no means thoroughly. Books, papers, and prints were flung into separate heaps or crammed unsorted into drawers; some stamps and coins

were collected, but more were left lying about, and a general sweep into a huge waste-paper basket of all remaining papers, circulars, &c., carried out his very rudimentary notions of tidiness and good order. Then, as he went out, with a sudden impulse he said to his landlady—

'As my room will be all in confusion to-night, Mrs. Merton, I will fling myself upon your hospitality for a cup of tea.'

And the good lady assented, before she exactly realized to what she was pledging herself.

Walton refused more than one good invitation for that evening in the course of the day. Somehow he found himself looking forward to the widow's little room adjoining his own. There was a pleasant voice that was musical and low, which that night should be musical and low to him; which could sing magnificently, and that night should sing magnificently for him. When he got back to the house, after dinner at his club, the place was in the utmost turmoil and disorder, and the little parlour was a perfect haven of brightness and peace. The widow gave him his cup of tea. Mabel was there, a really beautiful girl,—and I am not using that much-abused term lightly—calm and ladylike as a princess. Mrs. Merton, with all her goodness, had, perhaps, rather deteriorated during those years of her widowhood, under the unfavourable process of letting lodgings; but Mabel had all the frankness, grace, and culture that can belong to the well-bred maiden of eighteen. The voice was as low and musical, the singing as glorious as he had anticipated. Walton himself sang well. Let it be said for him that he was a good-looking fellow, with excessively gentlemanly manners, soft intonation, and large dreamy eyes, but a few grey hairs were prematurely peeping out amid the curly brown.

'I am afraid you are a very careless man, Mr. Walton,' said Mabel. 'When we went into your room, after you were gone out, we found a couple of photographs, a dozen postage-stamps, and three shillings, in silver and copper, not to mention

a lot of papers, which I am not at all sure that you wished to have destroyed.'

'Oh, never mind the papers,' said Mr. Walton; 'but I am much obliged for the other trifles.'

'There they are, on the mantelpiece,' said Mrs. Merton.

And on the mantelpiece the careless man left them, perhaps on purpose that he might come in and ask for them next day.

It was a delicious evening. Mr. Walton enjoyed himself thoroughly. Such a pretty home scene, by its rarity and attractiveness, pleased him greatly. Such frank confidences and intimacy with two good women, and one young and beautiful, was what he could thoroughly appreciate. He was a man of a very susceptible nature; and, as he took his candle and went up those uncarpeted stairs, picking his way through the *débris* of the day's hostile work, to his renovated chamber, he thought that if Mabel Merton were only a young lady with an immense amount of money, he could take the whole house off her mother's hands, and live, not unhappily, with her as his wife. Such are the silly speculations of the unoccupied mind.

The next morning he breakfasted in the drawing-room apartment appertaining to the member of parliament, who had gone down for his Easter holiday to see the Volunteer Review. But after breakfast he descended into Mrs. Merton's pleasant sitting-room, to claim the photographs, the stamps, and the stray sixpences. Mabel was there, fresh as the dawn, and with an unrestrained expression of pleasure as the guest of last night entered. He persuaded her to go on with her painting, which his own knowledge of art told him was really excellent. Then they fell into conversation, and she asked him whether he could give any advice or assistance about being a governess. Thus one or two morning hours stole by, and then a servant entered.

'Please, sir, a man at the door wishes to know if you have any answer to the letter which was left here for you the day before yesterday.'

'Dear me! What letter was that, I wonder?' said the careless Walton.

'It was the letter which the gentleman wrote here,' said Mabel, 'and which I laid on your desk. I told Susan particularly to draw your attention to it.'

'So I did, sir,' said Susan.

'I remember it now,' said Mr. Walton; 'but I am afraid that I never looked at it. What on earth shall I do? Oh, tell the man, Susan, that there is no answer.'

When Susan went to give the message, Miss Merton, with a vague impulse, went out into the passage. The messenger was a highly respectable man, and did not appear to be quite satisfied with the answer.

'Is there anything particular?' asked Mabel, for she had a practical mind, and it occurred to her that the careless lodger might be treating an important matter rather summarily.

'It must be particular,' said the messenger, 'for Sir Charles Vernou said that it was to be sent down to him to-night, in his own despatch-box, to Windsor Castle, where he has gone.'

And the man was gone in a moment.

Mabel was astounded at this remark of the messenger, and hurried to tell Mr. Walton. And Mr. Walton certainly looked seriously discomposed.

'Good gracious, Miss Merton! It is a most important letter—one that I have long expected—from the Secretary of State. Sir Charles must have left it himself.'

Quick as thought, with all the enthusiasm and elasticity of youth, Miss Merton had caught up her hat, and had discerned the messenger afar down the Park, and had started in pursuit.

Walton went into his room, and instituted a thorough search. Alas! his room was now in a frightful state of tidiness. Not a single stray paper was lying about. He went to the drawers and littered their contents to the floor. Then he went down on his knees and searched through them all. Mrs. Merton was summoned—the servants—the harpies

of charwomen—but nothing was known, except that some papers had been torn up and others burnt below stairs.

Just then Mabel returned, and the office-messenger with her. She at once saw the reason of all this confusion.

'Mr. Walton,' she said, blushing, 'after I found those other things in your room, I fancied you might have mislaid some more stamps and photographs in the waste-paper basket, so I told Wilson (an absent assistant at this memorable cleaning) to take the empty waste-paper basket down-stairs in mamma's little room, that she might see if you had left anything of importance by accident in it.'

Into mamma's little room they went, and Mabel's quick eye soon detected the envelope with her own cipher, which she had given to the caller. Mr. Walton tore it open, and read:—

'MY DEAR SIR,

'I was sorry to find you out when I did myself the pleasure of calling to-day. I am glad to be able to offer you the legal office of Inspector of Crown Leases, generally given to a barrister of your standing. It is a thousand a year. Please to let me hear from you immediately in case you accept.

'Yours truly,

'CHARLES VERNON.

'J. Walton, Esq.'

You may believe that, with wonderful self-reproaches, an immediate and very grateful acceptance was sent.

You may also believe that before very long, Mrs. Merton let no more lodgings. Mr. Walton ascended, however, with great grandeur to the drawing-room apartments, vacated by the M.P.—and he was not companionless. This is what came of the Spring Cleaning.

#### THE INTER-UNIVERSITY GAMES IN 1869.

THE afternoon of Thursday, the 18th of March last, found me once more on my way to Brompton, to witness the Sixth Annual Athletic Contest between the two Universities. The scene was no longer laid at Beaufort House: again the venue has been changed, and the meeting—which has by turns been held at Oxford, Cambridge, and for the last two years on the temporary ground of Beaufort House—seems at length to have found a more suitable and permanent arena on the new ground of the Amateur Athletic Club. Until the day in question I was (I am ashamed to say) in almost total ignorance as to the nature and constitution of the Amateur Athletic Club; but being interested to learn something of a club, which has succeeded in transforming the cabbage garden of November last into the admirable running-ground which, on this occasion, met my view, I obtained information as to the club and its members from a source which never fails to afford me the best, upon all subjects connected with Athletics. Some of the particulars which I

gleaned will be interesting to many, especially to those who, though far distant from the scenes of their former struggles and triumphs, cherish the remembrance of those contests, and look with keen interest for reliable information on any great athletic reform. The Amateur Athletic Club was founded in December, 1865, by a few devoted admirers of every kind of athletic pursuit. The original members were chiefly members of the Universities, Army, and Civil Service. Their objects were to establish a representative body which should hold a position analogous to that of the Marylebone Cricket Club in the cricket world: a body which could, by its committee, direct and control all subordinate amateur meetings in the kingdom; which should publish a code of rules to be adopted by all amateur athletic clubs; and which should, in fact, stimulate and encourage every branch of athletic pursuit. How great a success the scheme proved, may be gathered from the fact, that within three months of its foundation it held an amateur champion

meeting, and has continued to hold one in every year. It has, moreover, established champion cups for amateur boxing, as well as for some of the races; and annually gives a great number of cups and medals as prizes for swimming and foot-racing, walking, jumping, and feats of strength.

I could tell a great deal more of what the club has done and of what it still hopes to do; but perhaps the greatest benefit of all is, that, after a roving and precarious existence, it has, through the enterprise of one of its leading members, laid out the new running-ground at West Brompton, and so provided a recognized and suitable ground for practice, and for holding the various meetings in London. In short, the club has supplied the most pressing wants of every amateur athlete; and I think I may predict for it a glorious career, for I believe it to be an institution which not only every athletic performer of the present day, but also every lover of athletic pursuits in days long gone by, will feel it his duty to support.

The Inter-University meeting was the first that had ever been held on this new ground, and of course, under the pressure of so great a crowd of spectators, some of the arrangements were found slightly insufficient; but the few mistakes were all of a character that can easily be remedied, and certainly the ground shows every capability of development, and there is ample space for a splendid cricket-ground, as well as for racket-courts, swimming-baths, and, in fact, anything which the requirements of the members demand and the resources of the club permit. I certainly do congratulate the committee on having already done so much for the athletic world, and wish them heartily the success they merit.

But I fear I have digressed somewhat from the subject of this paper, and must recal my mind to describe something of what was achieved by Dark and Light Blue on this occasion. My satisfaction at seeing so great a step achieved in the cause of athletics must be the excuse for the digression. And though I could

ramble on for some time on the general topics of these now popular recreations, I turn, not unwillingly, to the events of the day, for truly they were glorious contests, unsurpassed by few (if by any) since the day when the shouts of Darbyshire deafened the ear at the conclusion of the first race ever run between the two Universities.

The ground and the stands were thronged with a brilliantly-attired company of spectators, even before the games commenced. Those wearing the light blue looked anxious and constrained, as if still suffering from the defeat of the previous afternoon at Barnes, and fearing lest a like fate awaited them on this occasion. The supporters of Oxford, on the other hand, bore an unusually cheerful expression, for the Oxford team was reported to be particularly strong, and so the glory of another victory, which they regarded as already gained, roused their spirits and lit up their eager faces. Certainly the Dark Blue prospects looked particularly bright, for, as will be seen when we come to discuss each particular competition, in every case but two, the trials at Oxford in the University Athletic Games contrasted favourably with the corresponding competitions at Cambridge. How large a part Dame Fortune plays in these contests, or rather how impossible it is to compare the merits of individual men until they are pitted one against another, the results will show. But certainly before the games were commenced, the odds were much in favour of Oxford proving victorious.

Shortly after two o'clock, and whilst the March sun was still shining brightly, the games commenced by the High Jump. For some reason or other, this did not excite among the spectators the interest which it has in former years. Possibly, being the first event, and occupying some considerable time, the spectators needed something more soul-stirring, before their enthusiasm reached the usual University pitch.

For Oxford there appeared R. L. N. Michell, of Christ Church, whom all will remember as the Two Mile

winner of 1867, after that magnificent struggle with C. Long, of Trinity, Cambridge. For Cambridge, J. G. Hoare, of Trinity, who jumped unsuccessfully last year, and E. O. Phelps, of Sidney, contended. Michell had jumped 5 ft. 6½ in. at Oxford, whereas, at Cambridge, Hoare and Phelps tied at 5 ft. 2 in. For this event, therefore, Oxford appeared singularly well in, but it being known that the ground at Cambridge was terribly bad on the day on which Hoare and Phelps jumped, the Light Blue partisans did not despair. F. Philpott, of whom we shall hear again before our story is ended, was also entered on behalf of the Dark Blue, but he reserved his strength for other contests. None of the three competitors failed until the bar was put at 5 ft. 5 in., which height Phelps could not get over. Michell and Hoare both cleared it well, but neither of them were able to get any higher. So the first event resulted in a tie. With such judges as officiated on this occasion it is almost impossible to imagine a mistake; but it was suggested—and I confess I rather gave credence to the rumour—that the height which was cleared by Michell and Hoare was certainly not less than 5 ft. 6½ in.; still the eye is not unfrequently deceived on questions of height and distance. Of the competitors Hoare is decidedly the best jumper in point of style; Michell, though he gets clean over, never, to my mind, jumps with any appearance of ease or certainty.

Next on the card came the Hundred Yards, and a very grand display of sprint running took place. The Oxonians were J. P. Tennent, of Wadham, the winner of last year, and J. G. Wilson, of Worcester. In the Oxford University Games, Wilson was the winner, Philpott, of St. Edmund's Hall, whose name has already been mentioned, being second; Tennent was only third, but, in consequence of Philpott being anxious to reserve himself for the Hurdle and Broad Jump, Tennent was elected to run in his stead.

The Cantabs were C. C. Corfe, of Jesus, the President of the University Athletic Club, and J. E. Strachan, of Trinity Hall. This was

the third year in which Corfe has won the Light Blue in the same contest; Strachan was a new candidate. At Cambridge, Corfe defeated Strachan by two yards, and the times in the two trials were taken to be exactly the same, namely, 10½ sec. each. But, owing to the fact that Tennent made such good time last year, and that Wilson had this year beaten him, the latter was made a very strong favourite, nor did he in any way disappoint his supporters.

After breaking away four or five times they were despatched to a very average start, Strachan getting off the best. At sixty yards Strachan was leading by a yard, Corfe and Wilson level, Tennent last, when suddenly Wilson shot out with a magnificent rush, and landed himself a winner by three yards at least. Corfe was a foot behind Strachan, and Tennent last by three yards. The time was 10½ sec. It is worthy of comment, that, on this occasion, Corfe was as far in front of Tennent as he was behind him last year, and Wilson beat Corfe by as much as Corfe beat Tennent. From this it would seem, either that Wilson is an extraordinarily good man, or else Tennent is quite off his last year's form. Certainly Tennent did not move as he did last year; and I fancy Corfe does not like a soft path, for he never runs so well as on Fenner's, where the course is unusually hard.

Whilst the men were coming out for the Mile, the next event, the excitement increased. Oxford men were very confident, as well they might be, and not a few Cantabs knew that Royds was very fit and likely to improve on his Cambridge performance, which had been done under most unfavourable circumstances. The Oxonians were nobly represented by R. V. Somers-Smith of Merton, who ran for them in the quarter of a mile last year, and did wonders at Oxford this spring, winning the Half-mile and Mile, and running second in the Quarter of a Mile in the Oxford University Games; the Mile being run in the fine time of 4 min. 33 sec., the fastest ever done on the Marston ground. Their second horse was S. G. Scott, of Magdalen, who won

for them in 1867, and ran fourth last year. Lastly, they ran J. W. Laing, the conqueror of Lawes in 1866, who ran second to Gibbs, of Jesus, Cambridge, last year; doing the mile in 4 min. 43 sec. Surely these made up a team which any one might well be proud or afraid of.

For Cambridge there appeared E. Royds, who ran second to Scott in 1867, and also tried so gamely in the Three Miles last year. His fellow-competitor was H. P. Gurney, of Clare, who also ran for Cambridge last year. Royds won the Cambridge mile in 4 min. 43 sec.; so the Dark Blue appeared to have nearly 10 sec. to the good. After starting they ran in a cluster for the first lap (there being three to the mile), Scott forcing the pace, but closely followed by Lang and Royds, Somers-Smith being last. During the second lap, Scott and Laing running together, slightly increased their lead, and Somers-Smith passed Gurney. Just after entering the third and last lap, Royds, with consummate judgment, came out, and, running with great strength, raced down Laing and Scott one after the other. Three hundred yards from home Somers-Smith also passed the other Oxford men and came gradually up to Royds. They were level at the turn into the last straight, which is 180 yards long, and then commenced a most magnificent struggle, each straining every muscle. Royds, however, lasted longest, and getting in front one hundred yards from home, he managed to steal away and win one of the finest races ever witnessed by three yards in 4 min. 35 sec. Laing caught Scott on the post, and made a dead heat for third place about thirty yards behind Somers-Smith.

The ovation the winner received can be more easily imagined than described; and certainly he richly deserved it, for he had by himself to race down each of the three Oxonians one after another, and the judgment he showed in so doing was very fine. He has during his whole career run with undoubted pluck, but on this occasion he showed much greater strength than in any previous race. Somers-Smith is a very fine goer, but I think half

a mile is more his distance, as his turn of speed is rather thrown away in a mile. The unexpected pleasure of winning the Mile seemed to inspire the Light Blue competitors and partisans with fresh hopes, and certainly the stroke of fortune so nobly gained led to a brighter result than the most sanguine Cantab had even dared to hope. It is a wise arrangement which was adopted by the authorities in putting the hammer next after such a race as the Mile, inasmuch as before the excitement produced by such a magnificent race and close finish has subsided this long and rather wearisome competition is half over. Still I am no advocate for withdrawing from the programme the contest known as Throwing the Hammer. I think it an exercise which displays great activity and strength, and which, when well executed, is a sight amply repaying the time spent in its decision. The honour of Cambridge was defended by H. Leeke, of Trinity, who was second last year with 98 ft. 8 in., when T. Batson, of Lincoln, Oxford, was first with 99 ft. 6 in. He was assisted by H. C. Shelton, of Pembroke. Oxford had only one representative, namely, F. A. Waite, of Balliol, who, like Shelton, had never appeared before. The attempts were fairly even up till Waite's third throw, when the hammer covered 101 ft. The Dark Blue cheers at this throw seemed ominous of victory, but Leeke, nothing daunted, steadily increased the length of his throws about 2 ft. at each attempt, until with his fifth throw he sent the unwieldy weapon 103 ft. 11 in., being the longest distance ever thrown in a match by an amateur. Shelton's best throw was 95 ft. 1 in. Leeke and Waite are both remarkably good throwers, and it is hard to choose between them; Leeke has the advantage of height, which he does not fail to make use of. If Shelton is only properly taught he will make the finest thrower ever seen, for even now he is a very fair thrower, although he loses almost entirely the advantage gained by his two first springs and swingings of the hammer. If he will only practise carrying on the impetus



gained, without a check, he will next year be very nearly best. I cannot leave this contest without again entering my protest against the method by which the hammer-throwing is measured—a method which, to my mind, has no redeeming feature to recommend it, and which goes far to degrade what can and ought to be made a competition of great skill into one of brute force.

I have omitted to mention that at Cambridge Leeks threw 98 ft. 6 in., at Oxford Waite 97 ft. 10 in., in their respective trial contests.

And now the competitors enter the ground for the Hurdles, that most popular of all races. Strangely enough none of them are old hands. The Oxonians are F. O. Philpott, of St. Edmund's Hall, and F. C. Williamson, of Pembroke. In the Oxford University Games Philpott ran a dead heat with Hillyard, of Pembroke, who had on two occasions represented his University, but the latter was precluded from competing on account of his standing at the University, four years' residence being the limit.

The Cantabs were W. W. Cooper, of St. John's, and E. E. Toller, of Trinity. The times of the two trial contests were about the same, viz., 17½ min. They got off to a very fair start, but Toller had a clear lead over the first hurdle. At the next flight he fell, leaving Philpott and Cooper nearly level, and Williamson last. Cooper and Philpott ran very evenly to the fifth hurdle, the Oxonian gaining slightly, when the Cantab tired very fast, and Philpott going on as strong as ever, won by four yards in 17 sec. The winner is a very fine goer over hurdles, and takes them without any effort; but Cambridge was decidedly unfortunate in being deprived of the services of Pitt Taylor, of Trinity, who won so well for her last year. Cooper has certainly not improved much since he went up to the University; in fact, I think his best performance was that in the Freshmen's games in 1867.

Putting the Weight came next, a contest which, though very interesting to those who understand it, is, I must allow, not a very exciting

spectacle to the general public or casual outsider. Neither of the Oxonians had ever represented their University before; they were S. F. Lucas of Exeter and W. H. R. Denville of Pembroke. Lucas put 34 ft. ½ in. in the Oxford Games. Cambridge was represented by R. Waltham, of St. Peters (the fourth year of his appearance), and E. Phelps, of Sidney, the high jumper. At Cambridge, Waltham had put 38 ft. (I believe the longest distance ever done by an amateur), so that there was not much difficulty in naming the winner. Owing, however, to the state of the ground, the putting was not so good as expected. Waltham covered 34 ft. 3 in. at his first attempt, and then stood out, as in former years, watching the others do their best in their six attempts. Lucas, at his third attempt, put 33 ft. 11 in., but could get no further; the others were some distance behind. Waltham only made one more effort, when he put 34 ft. 3 in. In 1867 he won with 34 ft. 9 in. and in 1868 with 34 ft. 3 in. Strangely enough, with all her reputation for gymnastic exercise, Oxford has never succeeded in winning this event.

One of the closest and finest struggles of the day, nay, more, one of the finest races I have ever witnessed, took place in the quarter-mile which stood next on the card. The Light Blue was worn by C. C. Corfe, of Jesus, the hundred-yard runner and Cambridge President, to whose antecedents I have already referred, and by A. R. Upcher, of Trinity, a freshman at his University. The best-known performance of the latter had been running second to Corfe in the previous week at Cambridge, being beaten by 4 yards in 51 sec. Oxford was represented by J. G. Wilson, of Worcester, fresh from his victory in the Hundred Yards, and A. F. Jeffreys, of Christchurch, who was third to Wilson and Somers-Smith on the Marston Ground, the quarter then being run in 53 sec. These times apparently gave Cambridge a great chance, but the result showed there was no great difference between them. They started very slowly, Jeffreys leading. At the first turn Wilson took the

lead from him, closely pressed by Corfe, and Upcher also passed Jeffreys. Round the last corner Wilson faltered, and Corfe took the lead and maintained it by a yard until 70 yards from home. Then he was again collared by Wilson, who got in front and led to within 5 yards of the post, where he fell, apparently run clean out; Corfe passed him, but tiring to nothing, he in his turn was caught by Upcher on the post and beaten by a yard. The time was 53½ sec. As will be gathered from the brief description given above, the race throughout was a grand spectacle of pluck and pace. I was astonished at the result, as Corfe seemed to me the strongest man of the four. My impression is that the race was run too slow for him. Had Jeffreys cut the work out faster at the beginning, I think Corfe would have won; but as the race was run, Wilson remaining fresh till the last 150 yards, was enabled by his fine turn of speed to run Corfe down, and then, not staying to the end, he let up Upcher. The Light Blue have great reason to congratulate themselves in possessing two such grand quarter-of-a-mile runners as Ridley and Upcher, both eligible for next year, and Oxford will have to find a very good man to divide them.

The next event, the Broad Jump, was anticipated with very great interest by both sides, as it was known that the contest would be very close. For Oxford there appeared F. O. Philpott, St. Edmund's Hall, the hurdle-racer, and J. Brookes, of Pembroke. For Cambridge the apparently indefatigable champions Waltham and Phelps. Waltham had won at Cambridge with 19 ft. 7 in., and Phelps had been known to jump well over 20 ft. Philpott, at Oxford, had jumped 20 ft. 7 in. None of them seemed in form at first, but at his third jump Waltham covered 19 ft. 3 in. Philpott could not beat it until his very last try, when he seemed to get into his own style, and made a very fine jump of 19 ft. 6 in. Waltham, however, not to be beaten, and encouraged, no doubt, by the knowledge that he had three more trials, and that the odd event depended on it, went well

at it and cleared 20 ft. 8 in., and that, too, from a bad take off. This event gave the Light Blue the victory, and the cheering of the Cantabs, as may be imagined, was loud and long. Before I pass on to the last and greatest event of the meeting, let me ask those who read this account, and who do not understand athletics from experience derived in practice, whether they appreciate what a wide jump of over 20 ft. is? Let them get up in their drawing-rooms and measure out 20 feet on the floor, and they will be inclined to say, is it possible that a man has cleared that at one bound? Yes, and two feet more. Wonderful as it may seem, A. C. Toswill, of Oriel, Oxford, the Dark Blue champion of last year, though debarred by too long residence from representing them on this occasion, jumped, in the Oxford Games this year, *twenty-two feet two inches*. Harrow boys take you with pride to show one or two of Buller and Maitland's mythical jumps; Rugby still shows over 21 feet, jumped by C. Bowen more than thirteen years ago. Little and Roupell raised the University standard of high jumping from 5 ft. 3 in. to 5 ft. 9 in.; but the name of Toswill, of Oriel, must for the present, and will perhaps for some years, be recorded as the only amateur who has beaten 22 feet.

The Three Miles, the long race! I always feel sad when the men start, because I know that my afternoon's enjoyment is nearly over, and that the cheers which greet the winner will recal me from my dreams of the past to the realities of a life full of occupations totally unconnected with Athletics.

The only man of the six competitors who had appeared before was J. H. Morgan, of Trinity, Oxford, whose wonderful performance in 1868 will be in the recollection of so many. The other Oxford competitors to the post were K. A. Deakin, of St. John's, and E. Ashmead Bartlett, of St. Mary's Hall. The Cambridge men were T. T. Paine and L. E. Whigham, both of Trinity, and G. Henderson, of Pembroke. The three miles at the two Universities were run in exactly the same time, 15 min. 58 sec.; but if from this

coincidences a spark of hope was kindled in any Cambridge breast that they were going to see a race, the first two laps told them that they were indeed doomed to disappointment. Race there was none, for Morgan went off with the lead, and although for a time some of the men stuck to him, and Paine, in the second mile, made most gallant efforts to do so, it was all of no avail; he went farther and farther ahead, and apparently faster and faster as he went, until he won by 28 secs. from Paine, who was quite as far ahead of Bartlett, the third man. The time of the winner was 15 min. 34 sec. Of Morgan's running it is impossible to speak too highly. I can simply repeat what was said last year, 'It must be seen to be appreciated.' He finished, on this occasion, fresh as ever, and, in fact, seemed to treat the whole affair as a mere exercise trot. Paine ran a most plucky race, but he met a man far too good for him; in fact, there are few professionals who could beat Morgan at three miles.

So ended the Games in 1869, Cambridge again securing a good victory, having gained five events against three won by Oxford, and one being a dead heat. Once only since these games were established in 1864, has Oxford claimed the victory, though this year she seemed to hold it in her hands. In 1864 each University won four events; in 1865 Cambridge six against Oxford three; in 1866 Cambridge five against Oxford three, there being one dead heat; in 1867 Cambridge six and Oxford three; and in 1868 Oxford five against Cambridge four. In all, Cambridge has won on four occasions, Oxford on one, and one drawn.

The judges this year were again men renowned in old University athletic sports, namely, the Hon. F. G. Pelham, formerly of Trinity, Cambridge, who ran for his University in the hundred yards in 1865 and in the quarter in 1865, 1866, and 1867. The other was the Earl of Jersey, of Balliol, Oxford, who represented his University in the mile and two miles in 1865. The referee was P. M. Thornton, of Jesus College, Cambridge, who ran for the

Light Blue in the quarter and mile in 1864. He, moreover, is rightly regarded as in very truth the virtual founder, though not the originator, of athletic games at his University. All the races were most admirably started by A. W. Lambert, of St. John's, Cambridge, who ran in the quarter of a mile last year.

The Public Schools were very badly represented this year compared with previous years, Eton claiming only Royds and Somers-Smith, Harrow the great Morgan, Charterhouse Cooper. Upcher comes from Rossall, Wilson from Durham, Laing from Blackheath, Scott from Brighton College, and Shelton from Guildford.

I am in hopes soon to see two more contests added to the programme, viz., a walking race and pole jumping. That they both would produce great competition will not, I think, be denied, and they commend themselves to the notice of the committees as being so extensively practised at both Universities.

High pole-jumping, when well executed, is perhaps the neatest exercise ever witnessed in athletic sports; nor need any objection be raised to lengthening the programme, for it is not too long at present, and by beginning with the walking race at one P.M. the whole time would not be really increased.

Before I bid farewell for another interval to the contests which I have been for the last few years permitted to chronicle in these pages, let me enter my humble protest against the tone and spirit of articles that have lately appeared in some of the newspapers to the effect that the widespread practice of athletic pursuits at our colleges and schools is injuring the intellectual capacities and scholastic attainments of Young England. Of course when recreations of so fascinating a nature have received such a re-enforcement as has lately occurred at the two Universities, and in London, by reason of the facilities previously unknown which are now afforded for their practice, there is the danger that (for a time) there may be a little excess in their pursuit. But I challenge any one to prove that the

standard of University scholarship and learning has in any way become lower since the establishment of these contests; and I deny that mental culture or intellectual pursuits are cared for less than in former years. Moreover, any temporary excess at present arising from the novelty of the pursuits and the recent progress they have made will soon pass away, and there will remain the great benefits that always accrue to a nation from the fact that her young men exercise their bodies as well as their minds by system and not at random. As far as I have seen—and I have endeavoured to observe carefully—I see that these pursuits have gone far to empty the billiard-rooms of our towns; they have put an end to

the card-playing at the small hours of the night, and the mid-day wine-parties got up to kill time; they have given to the hard-worked and preoccupied reading man a ready means of clearing his head and of changing the objectless routine of a walk for the advantage of a systematized course of exercise, without trenching on the precious hours of his studies. Nor is this all. I believe they have gone far to make our youth more manly, more noble, and more good-hearted. If I am right in my views, and if, as I think, this influence for good is likely to continue, such meetings as that I have attempted to describe are worthy of the support, patronage, and assistance of every right-thinking Englishman.

D. D. R.

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### M. OR N.

*\*Similia similibus curantur.\**

By G. J. WHYTE-MELVILLE,

AUTHOR OF 'DIGBY GRAND,' 'CERISE,' 'THE GLADIATORS,' ETC.

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### CHAPTER XIII.

#### SIXES AND SEVENS.

IN the mean time, while Dick Stanmore is hugging himself in the warm atmosphere of hope, while Lord Bearwarden hovers on the brink of a stream in which he narrowly escaped drowning long ago, while Tom Ryfe is plunged in depths of anxiety, jealousy, and humiliation, that scorch like liquid fire, Miss Bruce's dark eyes, and winning, wilful ways, have kindled the torch of mistrust and discord between two people of whom she has rarely seen the one and never heard of the other.

Mr. Bargrave's chambers in Gray's Inn were at no time more remarkable for cleanliness than other like apartments in the same locality; but the dust lies inch-thick now in all places where dust can lie, because that Dorothea, more moping and tearful than ever, has not the heart to clean up, no nor even to wash her own hands and face in the afternoon, as heretofore.

She loves her 'Jim,' of course, all the more passionately that he makes her perfectly miserable, neglecting her for days together, and when they do meet, treating her with an indifference far more lacerating than any amount of cruelty or open scorn.

Not that he is always good-humoured. On the contrary, 'Gentleman Jim,' as they call him, has lost much of the rollicking, devil-may-care recklessness that earned his nickname, and is often morose now—sometimes even fierce and savage to brutality.

The poor woman has had a quarrel with him, not two hours ago, originating, it is but fair to state, in her own extremely irritating conduct regarding beer, Jim being anxious to treat his lady-love with that fluid for the purpose, as he said, of 'drowning unkindness,' and possibly with the further view of quenching an inconvenient curiosity she has lately indulged about his movements. No

man likes to be watched; and the more reason the woman he is betraying has to doubt him, the less patience he shows for her anxiety, the less he tolerates her inquiries, her jealousy, or her reproaches.

Now Dorothea's suspicions, sharpened by affection, have of late grown extremely wearisome, and Jim has been heard to threaten, more than once, that 'if so be as she doesn't mend her manners, and live conformable, he'll take an' hook it, he will, blessed if he won't!'—a dark saying which sinks deeply and painfully into the forlorn one's heart. When, therefore, instead of drinking her share, as usual, of a foaming quart measure containing beer, dashed with something stronger, this poor thing set it down untasted, and forthwith began to cry, the cracksman's anger knew no bounds.

'Drop it!' he exclaimed, brutally. 'You'd best, I tell ye! D'ye think I want my blessed drink watered with your blessed nonsense? What's come to ye, ye contrairy devil? I thought I'd larned ye better. I'll see if I can't larn ye still. Would ye now!'

It was almost a blow,—such a push as is the next thing to actual violence, and it sent her staggering from the sloppy bar at which their altercation took place against a bench by the wall, where she sat down pale and gasping, to the indignation of a slatternly woman nursing her child, and the concern of an honest coalheaver, who had a virago of a wife at home.

'Easy, mate!' expostulated that worthy, putting his broad frame between the happy pair. 'Hold on a bit, an' give her a drop when she comes to. She'd a' throwed her arms about your neck a while ago, an' now she'd as soon knife ye as look at ye.'

Wild-eyed and pale, Dorothea glared round, as Clytemnestra may have glared when her hand rested on the fatal axe; but this Holborn Agamemnon did not seem destined to fall by a woman's blow, inasmuch as the tide was effectually turned by another woman's interference.

The slatternly lady, shouldering her child, as a soldier does his fire-

lock, thrust herself eagerly forward.

'Knife him!' she exclaimed, with a most unfeminine execration. 'I'd knife him, precious soon, if it was me, the blessed willen! To take an' use a woman like that there—a nasty, cowardly, sneakin', ugly, tall-faced beast!'

Had it not been for the imputation on his beauty, Dorothea might perhaps have blazed out in open rebellion, or remained passive in silent sulks; but to hear *her* Jim, the flash man of a dozen gin-shops, the beloved of a score of rivals, called 'ugly,' was more than flesh and blood could endure. She turned fiercely on her auxiliary and gave battle at once.

'And who arst *you* to interfere, mem, if I may venture to make the inquiry?' said she, with that polite but spasmodic intonation that denotes the approaching row. 'Keep yerself to yerself, if you please, mem. And I'll thank ye not to go for to come between me and my young man, not till you've got a young man of your own, mem, and if you'd like to walk out, there's the door, mem, and don't you try for to give *me* none o' your sauce, for I'm not a-goin' to put up with it.'

The slatternly woman ran her guns out and returned the broadside with promptitude.

'Door, indeed! you poor whey-faced drab, you dare to say the word door to *me*, a respectable woman, as Mister Tripes here knows me well, and have a score against me behind that there very door as you disgraces, and as it's *you* as ought to be t'other side, you ought, for it's out of the streets as *you* come, well I knows, an' say another word, and I'll take that there bonnet off of your head, and chuck it into them streets and *you* arter it. Oh dear! oh dear! that ever I should be spoke to like this here, and my master out o' work a month come Toosday, and this here gentleman standing by; but I'll set my mark on ye, if I get six months for it—I will!'

Thus speaking, or rather screaming, and brandishing her baby, as the Gonfaloniere waves his gonfalon, the slatternly woman, swelling into

a fury for the nonce, made a dive at Dorothea, which, but for the interposition of 'this here gentleman,' as she called the coalheaver, might have produced considerable mischief. That good man, however, took a deal of 'weathering,' as sailors say, and ere either of the combatants could get round his bulky person, the presence of a policeman at the door warned them that ordeal by battle had better be deferred till a more fitting opportunity. They burst into tears therefore, simultaneously, and the dispute ended, as such disputes often do, in a general reconciliation, cemented by the consumption of much exciseable fluid, some of it at the expense of the philanthropic coalheaver, whose simple faith involved a persuasion that the closest connection must always be preserved between good-fellowship and beer.

After these potations, it is not surprising that the slatternly woman should have found herself, baby and all, under the care of the civil power at a police-station, or that Gentleman Jim and his lady-love should have adjourned to sober themselves in the steaming gallery of a playhouse.

Behold them, then, wedged into a front seat, Dorothea's bonnet hanging over the rail, Jim's gaudy handkerchief bulging with oranges, both spectators too absorbed in the action of the piece to realize its improbabilities, and the woman thoroughly identifying herself with the character and fortunes of its heroine.

The theatre is small, but the audience if not select are enthusiastic; the stage is narrow, but affords room for a deal of strutting and striding about on the part of an overpowering actor in the inevitable belt and boots of the melodramatic highwayman. The play represents certain startling passages in the career of one Claude Duval, formerly a running footman, afterwards—strange anomaly!—a robber on horseback, distinguished for polite manners and bold riding.

This remarkable person has a wife, devoted to him of course. In the English drama all wives are

good; in the French all are bad, and people tell you that a play is the reflection of real life. Besides this dutiful spouse, he cherishes an attachment for a young lady of high birth and aristocratic (stage) manners. She returns his tenderness, as it is extremely natural a young person so educated and brought up would return that of a criminal, who has made an impression on her heart by shooting her servants, rifling her trunks, and forcing her to dance a minuet with him on a deserted heath under a harvest moon.

This improbable incident affords a favourite scene, in which Dorothea's whole soul is absorbed, and to which Jim devotes an earnest attention, as of one who weighs the verisimilitude of an illustration, that he may accept the purport of the parable it conveys.

Dead servants (in profusion), struggling horses, the coach upset, and the harvest moon, are depicted in the back scene, which represents besides an illimitable heath, and a gibbet in the middle distance: all this under a glare of light, as indeed it might well be, for the moon is quite as large as the hind-wheel of the coach.

In the foreground are grouped, the hero himself, a comic servant with a red nose and a fiddle, an open trunk, and a young lady in travelling costume, viz., white satin shoes, paste diamonds, ball-dress, and lace veil. The tips of her fingers rest in the gloved hand of her assailant, whose voice comes deep and mellow through the velvet mask he wears.

'My preserver!' says the lady, a little inconsequently, while her fingers are lifted to the mask and saluted with such a smack as elicits a 'hocray!' from some disrespectful urchin at the back of the pit.

'To preserve beauty from the jeer of insult, the grasp of violence is my duty and my profession. To adore it is my religion—and my fate!' replies the gallant highwayman, contriving with some address to retain his hold of the lady's hand, though encumbered by spurs, a sword, pistols, a mask, and an enormous three-cornered hat.



'And this man is proscribed, hunted, in danger, in disgrace!' exclaims the lady, aside, and therefore loud enough to be heard in the street. Claude Duval starts. The start of such an actor makes Dorothea jump. 'Perdition!' he shouts, 'ye have reminded me of what were well buried fathom-deep—obliterated—forgotten. Tr'you, lady, 'tis ee-ven so! I have a compact with my followers—the ransom!'

'Shall be paid right willingly,' she answers; and forthwith the comic servant with the red nose wakes into spasmodic life, winks repeatedly, and performs a flourish on his 'property' fiddle, a little out of tune with the real instrument in the orchestra at his feet.

'What are they going to do?' asks Dorothea, in great anxiety.

'Hold your noise!' answers Jim, and the action of the piece progresses.

It is fortunate, perhaps, that minuets have gone out of fashion; if they involved such a test of endurance as that in which Claude Duval and his fair captive now disport themselves with an amount of bodily exertion it seems real cruelty to encore. His concluding caper shakes the mask from his partner's face, and the young lady falls, with a shriek, into his arms, leaving the audience in that happy state of perplexity, which so enhances the interest of a plot, as to whether her distress originates in excess of sentiment or deficiency of wind.

'It's beautiful!' whispers Dorothea, refreshing herself with an orange. 'It minds me of the first time you and me ever met at High-bury Barn.'

Jim grunts, but his grunt is not that of a contented sleeper, rather of one who is woke from a dream.

After a tableau like the last, it is natural that Claude Duval should find a certain want of excitement in the next scene, where he appears as a respectable householder in the apartments of his lawful spouse. This lady, leaving a cradle in the background, and advancing to the footlights, proceeds to hover round her husband, after the manner of stage wives, with neck protruded

and arms spread out, like a woman who is a little afraid of a wasp or earwig, but wants to catch the creature all the same. He sits with his back to her, as nobody ever does sit but a stage husband at home, and punches the floor with his spur. It is strictly natural that she should sing a faint song with a slow movement, on the spot.

It is perhaps yet more natural that this should provoke him exceedingly, so he jumps up, reaches a cupboard in two strides, and pulls out of it his whole paraphernalia, sword, pistols, mask, three-cornered hat, everything but his horse. Then the wife, from her knees, informs all whom it may concern, that for the first time in their happy married life she has learned her husband is a robber, as they both call it, by 'prowfession.'

Dorothea's sympathies, woman-like, are with the wife. Jim, whose interest is centred in the young lady, finds this part of the performance rather wearisome, and thirsts, to use his own expression, for 'a drain.'

Events now succeed each other with startling rapidity. Claude Duval is seen at Ranelagh, still in his boots, where he makes fierce love to his young lady, and exchanges snuff-boxes (literally) with a duke. Next, in a thicket, beset by thieftakers, from whom he escapes after prodigies of valour, aided by the comic servant, and thereafter guided by that singular domestic to a place of safety, which turns out to be the young lady's bedroom. Here Jim becomes much excited, fancying himself for the moment a booted hero, rings, laced-coat, Stein-kirk handkerchief, and all. His dress touches that of his companion, but instinctively he moves from her as far as the crowded seat will permit, while Dorothea, all unconscious, looks lovingly in his face.

'She's a bold thing, and I can't abide her,' is that lady's comment on the principal actress. 'She ought to think shame of herself she ought, a-cause of his wife at 'ome. But he's a good plucked-un, isn't he, Jim? and, lady or no lady, that goes a long way with a woman!'

Jim turned his head aside. Brutalized, besotted, depraved, there was yet in him a spark of that fire which lights men to their doom, and his eyes filled with tears.

But the thief-takers have Claude Duval by the throat at last; and there is a scene in court, where the young lady perjures herself unhesitatingly, and faints once more in the prisoner's arms. In vain. Claude Duval is sworn to, found guilty, condemned; and the stage is darkened for a grand finale.

Still gay, still gallant, still impenitent, and still booted, though in fetters, the highwayman sits in his prison cell, to be visited by the young lady, who cannot bear to lose her partner, and the wife, who still clings to her husband. Unlike Macheath, he seems in no way embarrassed by the position. His wife forgives him, at this supreme moment, all the sorrow he has caused her, in consideration of some unexplained past, 'gilded,' as she expresses it, 'by the sunny smiles of southern France,' while the young lady, holding on with great tenacity to his hand, weeps frantically on her knees.

A clock strikes. It is the hour of execution. Dorothea begins to sob, and Gentleman Jim clenches his hands. The back of the stage opens, to disclose a street, a crowd, a hangman, and the fatal Tyburn tree. Faint cheers are heard from the wings. The sheriff enters bearing in his hand a reprieve, written apparently on a window-blind. He is attended by the comic servant, through whose mysterious agency a pardon has been granted, and who sticks by his fiddle to the last.

Grand tableau: Claude Duval penitent. His wife in his arms. The young lady conveying in dumb show how platonic has been her attachment, of which, nevertheless, she seems a little ashamed. The sheriff benignant; the turnkeys amused; the comic servant, obviously in liquor, brandishing his fiddle-stick, and the orchestra playing 'God save the Queen.'

Walking home through the wet streets, under the flashing gas-lights, Dorothea and her companion pre-

serve an ominous silence. Both identify themselves with the fiction they have lately witnessed. The woman, pondering on Mrs. Duval's sufferings and the eventual reward of that good lady's constancy and truth; her companion, reflecting, not on the charms of the actress he has lately been applauding, but on another face which haunts him now, as the wills and water-sprites haunted their doomed votaries, and which must ever be as far out of reach as if it belonged indeed to some such being of another nature; thinking how a man might well risk imprisonment, transportation, hanging, for one kind glance of those bright eyes, one smile of those haughty, scornful lips; and comparing, in bitter impatience, that exotic beauty with the humble, homely creature at his side.

She looks up in his face. 'Jim,' says she, timidly, and cowering close to him the while, 'if you was took, and shopped, like him in the long boots, I'd go to quod with you, if they'd give me leave—I'd go to death with you, Jim, I would. I'd never forsake of you, I wouldn't! I couldn't, dear,—not if it was ever so!'

He shudders and shrinks from her. 'It might come sooner than you think for,' says he, adding, brutally enough; 'now you *could* do me a turn in the witness-box, though I shouldn't wonder but you'd cut out white like the others. Let's call in here, and take a drop o' gin afore they shuts up.'

The great picture of Thomas the Rhymer, and his Elfin Mistress, goes on apace. There is, I believe, but one representation in London of that celebrated prophet, and it is in the possession of his lineal descendant. Every feature, every shadow on that portrait has Simon Perkins studied with exceeding diligence and care, marvelling, it must be confessed, at the taste of the fairy queen. The accessories to his own composition are in rapid progress. Most of the fairies have been put in, and the gradual change from glamour to disillusion, is cunningly conveyed by a stream of cold grey morning light entering

the magic cavern from realms of upper earth, to deaden the glitter, pale the colouring, and strip, as it were, the tinsel, where it strikes. On the Rhymers himself our artist has bestowed an infinity of pains, preserving (no easy task) some resemblance to the original portrait, while he dresses his conception in the manly form and comely features indispensable to the situation.

But it is into the fairy queen herself that Simon loves to throw all the power of his genius, all the resources of his art. To this labour of love, day after day, he returns with unabated zest, altering, improving, painting out, adding, taking away, drinking in the while his model's beauty, as parched and thirsty gardens of Egypt drink in the overflowing Nile, to return a tenfold harvest of verdure, luxuriance, and wealth.

She has been sitting to him for three consecutive hours. Truth to tell, she is tired to death of it—tired of the room, the palette, the easel, the queen, the rhymers, the little dusky imp in the corner, whose wings are changing into scales and a tail, almost tired of dear Simon Perkins himself; who is working contentedly on (how can he?) as if life contained nothing more than effect and colouring—as if the reality were not better than the representation after all.

'A quarter of an inch more this way,' says the pre-occupied artist. 'There is a touch wanting in that shadow under the eye—thanks, dear Nina. I shall get it at last,' and he falls back a step to look at his work, with his head on one side, as nobody but a painter can look, so strangely does the expression of face combine impartial criticism with a satisfaction almost maternal in its intensity.

Before beginning again, his eye rested on his model, and he could not but mark the air of weariness and dejection she betrayed.

'Why, Nina,' said he, 'you look quite pale and tired. What a brute I am! I go painting on and forget how stupid it must be for you, who mustn't even turn your head to look at my work.'

She gave a stretch, and such a yawn! Neither of them very graceful performances, had the lady been less fair and fascinating, but Nina looked exceedingly pretty in their perpetration nevertheless.

'Work,' she answered. 'Do you call that work? Why you've undone everything you did yesterday, and put about half of it in again. If you're diligent, and keep on at this pace, you'll finish triumphantly with a blank canvas, like Penthesilea and her tapestry in my ancient history.'

'Penelope,' corrected Simon, gently.

'Well, Penelope! It's all the same. I don't suppose any of it's true. Let's have a peep, Simon. It can't be. Is that really like me?'

The colour had come back to her face, the light to her eye. She was pleased, flattered, half amused to find herself so beautiful. He looked from the picture to the original, and with all his enthusiasm for art awarded the palm to nature.

'It was like you a minute ago,' said he, in his grave, gentle tones. 'Or rather, I ought to say you were like it. But you change so, that I'm often in despair of catching you, and, somehow, I always seem to love the last expression best.'

There was something in his voice so admiring, so reverential, and yet so tender, that she glanced quickly, with a kind of surprise, in his face; that face, which, to an older woman who had known suffering and sorrow, might have been an index of the gentle heart, the noble chivalrous character within, which, to this girl, was simply pale and worn, and not at all handsome, but very dear, nevertheless, as belonging to her kind old Simon, the playmate of her childhood, the brother, and more than brother, of her youth.

Those encounters are sadly unequal, and very poor fun for the muffled fighter, in which one keeps the gloves on, while the other's blows are delivered with the naked fist.

Miss Algernon was at this time perhaps more attached to Simon Perkins than to any other creature in the world, that is to say, she did not

happen to like anybody else better. How different from him, to whom she represented the very essence of that spiritual life which, in our several ways, we all try to live, which so few of us know how to attain by postponing its enjoyment for a few short troubled years.

It is probable, that, if the painter had thrown down his brush at this juncture, and asked, simply, 'Nina, will you be my wife?' she would have answered, 'Thank you, kindly, yes, I will!' but although his judgment told him he was likely to succeed, his finer instincts warned him that an affirmative would be the sacrifice of her youth, her illusions, her possible future. Such sacrifice it was far more in Simon's nature to make than to accept.

'Will she ever know me thoroughly?' he used to think. 'Will the time ever come when I can say to her, "Nina, I am sure you care for me now, and therefore I am not afraid to tell you how dearly I loved you all through?" Such a time would be well worth waiting for, ay, though it never came for seven years, and seven more to the back of that. Then I should feel her happiness depended on mine. Now I often think the prince in the fairy tale will ride past our Putney villa some summer's day, like Launcelot through the barley sheaves (I'll paint Launcelot when I've time, with the ripe ears reddened in the sun, and the light flashing off his harness) ride by, and take Nina's heart away with him, and what will be left for me then? I could bear it! Yes, I could bear it if I knew she was happy. My darling, my darling! so that you walk on in joy and triumph, it matters little what becomes of me!'

The sentiment was perhaps overstrained. It is not thus that women are won. The fruit that drops into people's mouths is usually over-ripe, and the Sabine maiden would have thought less of her Roman lover, though, doubtless, she would have taken the initiative, rather than miss him altogether, had it been necessary to pounce on him in the vineyard and desire him, straightway, to carry her home. But the

bird of prey must have its natural victim, and such hearts as our poor generous painter possessed are destined for the talons and the beak. Ah! those who value them least win the great prizes in the lottery. Fortune smiles on the careless player—gold goes to the rich—streams run to the river, and if you have more mutton than you know what to do with, be sure that in your folds will be found the poor man's ewe-lamb. Put a ribbon round her neck, and be kind to her as he was. It is the least you can do!

'You've taken a deal of pains, Simon,' says the sitter, after a long and well-pleased scrutiny. 'Tell me, no flattery now, why should I be so difficult to paint?' Why, indeed, you saucy innocent coquette! Perhaps, because, all the while, you are turning the poor artist's head, and driving pins and needles into his heart.

'I ought to make a good likeness of you,' answers Simon, rather sadly. 'I'm sure, Nina, I know your face by heart. But I'm determined to take enormous pains with this picture. It's to be my great work. I want them to admire it at the Academy. I want all London to come and look at it. I want the critics, who know nothing, to say it's well drawn, and the artists, who do know something, to say it's well treated, and the public to declare my fairy queen is the loveliest, and the sweetest, and the dearest face they ever beheld. You see I'm very—very—ambitious, Nina!'

'Yes, I suppose all painters are,' replies Miss Algernon, with a little gasp of relief, accompanied by a little chill of something not quite unlike disappointment. 'But you ought to be tired of working, and I know I am tired of sitting. Hand me my bonnet, Simon—not upside down—why that's the top where the rose is, of course! And let's walk back through the Park. It will be nearly full by this time.'

So they walked back through the Park and it was full—full to overflowing; nevertheless, amongst all the riders, drivers, sitters, strollers, and idlers, there appeared neither of

the smart-looking gentlemen who had roused Nina's indignation by bowing to her in the morning, without having the honour of her acquaintance.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

##### THE OFFICERS' MESS.

A gigantic sentry of Her Majesty's household cavalry paces up and down in front of the officers' quarters at Knightsbridge Barracks some two hours before watch-setting. It is fortunate that constant use has rendered him insensible to admiration. Few persons of either sex pass under his nose without a glance of unqualified approval. They marvel at his stature, his spurs, his carbine, his overalls, his plumed helmet, towering high above their heads, and the stupendous moustaches, on which this gentleman-private prides himself more than on all the rest of his heroic attributes put together.

Beyond a shade of disciplined weariness, there is no expression whatever on his handsome face, yet it is to be presumed that the man has his thoughts too, like another. Is he back in Cumberland amongst his dales, a stalwart stripling fishing some lonely stream within the hills, watching a bout at 'knurr-and-spell' across the heather, or wrestling a fall in friendly rivalry with his cousin, a son of Anak, tall as himself? Does that purple sunset over Kensington Gardens remind him of Glaramara and Saddleback? Does that distant roar of wheels in Piccadilly recall the rush and ripple of the Solway charging up its tawny sands with the white horses all abreast in a spring-tide?

Perhaps he is wishing he was an officer with no kit to keep in order, no fatigue-duty to undergo, sitting merrily down to as good a dinner as luxury can provide, or a guest, of whom he has seen several pass his post in starched white neck-cloths and trim evening clothes. Perhaps he would not change with any of these, after all, when he reflects on his own personal advan-

tages, his social standing amongst his comrades, his keen appreciation and large consumption of beer and tobacco, with the innumerable conquests he makes amongst maids and matrons in the middle and lower ranks of life. Such considerations, however, impress themselves not the least upon his outward visage. A statue could not look more imperturbable, and he turns his head but very slightly, with supreme indifference, when peals of laughter, more joyous than common, are wafted through the open windows of the mess-room, where some of our friends have fairly embarked on that tide of good-humour and hilarity which sets in with the second glass of champagne.

It is a full mess; the colonel himself sits at dinner, with two or three friends, old brothers-in-arms, whose soldierlike bearing and manly faces betray their antecedents, though they may not have worn a uniform for months. A lately joined cornet looks at these with a reverence that I am afraid could be extorted from him by no other institution on earth. The adjutant and riding-master, making holiday, are both present—'To the front,' as they call it, enjoying exceedingly the jests and waggeries of their younger comrades. The orderly-officer, conspicuous by his belt, sits at one end of the long table. Lord Bearwarden occupies the other, supported on either side by his two guests, Tom Ryfe and Dick Stanmore. It is the night of Mrs. Stanmore's ball, and these last-named gentlemen are going there, with feelings how different, yet with the same object. Dick is full of confidence, elated and supremely happy. His entertainer experiences a quiet comfort and *bien-être* stealing over him, to which he has long been a stranger, while Tom Ryfe with every mouthful swallows down some emotion of jealousy, humiliation, or mistrust. Nevertheless he is in the highest spirits of the three.

'I tell you nothing can touch him, my lord, when hounds run,' says he, still harping on the merits of the horse he sold Lord Bear-

warden in the Park. Of course half the party are talking of hunting, the other half racing, soldiering, and women. 'He'd have been thrown away on most of the fellows we know. He wants a good man on his back, for if you keep him fretting behind it breaks his heart. I always said you ought to have him—you or Mr. Stanmore. He's just the sort for both of you. I'm sorry to hear yours are all coming up at Tattersall's,' adds Tom with a courteous bow to the opposite guest. 'Hope it's only to make room for some more.'

Dick disclaims. 'No, indeed,' says he, 'it's a *bonâ-fide* sale—with-out reserve, you know—I am going to give the thing up!'

'Give up hunting!' expostulates a very young subaltern on Dick's left. 'Why, you're not a soldier, are you? What shall you do with yourself? You have nothing to live for.'

Overcome by this reflection, he empties his glass and looks feelingly in his neighbour's face.

'Are you so fond of it too?' asks Dick, with a smile.

'Fond of it! I believe you!' answers the boy. 'What is there to be compared to it?—at least that I've tried, you know. I think the happiest fellow on earth is a master of fox-hounds, particularly if he hunts them himself: there's only one thing to beat it, and that's soldiering. I'd rather command such a regiment as this than be Emperor of China. Perhaps I shall, too, some day.'

The real colonel, sitting opposite, overhears this military sentiment, and smiles good-humouredly at his zealous junior. 'When you are in command,' says he, 'I hope you'll be down upon the cornets—they want a deal of looking up—I'm much too easy with them.' The young soldier laughed and blushed. In his heart he thought 'the chief,' as he called him, the very greatest man in the world, offering him that respect combined with affection which goes so far to constitute the efficiency of a regiment, hoping hereafter to tread in his footsteps, and carry out his system.

For ten whole minutes he held his tongue—and this was no small effort of self-restraint—that he might listen to the commanding officer's conversation with his guests, savouring strongly of professional interests, as comprising Crimean, Indian, and continental experiences, all tending to prove that cavalry massed, kept under cover, held well in hand, and 'offered' at the critical moment, was the force to render success permanent and defeat irretrievable.

When they got into a dissertation on shooing, with the comparative merits of 'threes' and 'sections' at drill, the young man refreshed himself liberally with champagne, and turned to more congenial discourse.

Of this there seemed no lack. The winner of the St. Leger was as confidently predicted as if the race were already in his owner's pocket. A match was made between two splendid dandies, called respectfully by their comrades 'Nobby' and 'The Dustman,' to walk from Knightsbridge Barracks to Windsor Bridge that day week—the odds being slightly in favour of 'The Dustman,' who was a peer of the realm. A moderate dancer was freely criticised, an exquisite singer approved with reservation, and the style of fighting practised by our present champion of the prize-ring unequivocally condemned. Presently a deep voice made itself heard in more sustained tones than belong to general conversation, and during a lull it became clear that the adjutant was relating an anecdote of his own military experience. 'It's a wonderful country,' said he, in reply to some previous observation. 'I'm not an Irishman myself, but I've observed that the most conspicuous men in all nations are pure Irish or of Irish extraction. Look at the service. Look at the ring—prize-fighters and book-makers. I believe the Slasher's mother was born in Connaught, and nothing will convince me but that Deerfoot came from Tipperary—east and west the world's full of them—they swarm, I'm told, in America, and I can answer for



them in Europe. Did ye ever see a Turk in a vineyard? He's the very moral of Pat in a potato-garden: the same frieze coat—the same baggy breeches—the same occasional smoke, every five minutes or so,—and the same rooted aversion to hard work. Go on into India—they're all over the place. Shall I tell you what happened to myself? We were engaged on the right of the army, getting it hot and heavy, all the horses with their heads up, but the men as steady as old Time. I was in the Lancers then, under Sir Hope. The Sikhs worked their guns beautifully, and presently we got the word to advance. It wasn't bad ground for manoeuvring, and we were soon into them. The enemy fought a good one—those Sikhs always do. There was one fine old white-bearded patriarch stuck to his gun to the last. His people were all speared and cut down, but he never gave back an inch. I can see him now, looking like the pictures of Abraham in my old Sunday-school book. I thought I'd save him if I could. Our chaps had got their blood up, and dashed in to finish him with their lances, but I kept them off with some difficulty, and offered him "quarter." I was afraid he wouldn't understand my language. "Quarter," says he, in the richest brogue you'll hear out of Cork—"quarter! you bloody thieves! will you stick a countryman, an' a comrade, ye murderin' villains, like a *boncen* in a butcher's shop!" He'd have gone on, I dare say, for an hour, but the men had their lances through him before you could say "knife." As my right-of-threes, himself a Paddy, observed—he was discoorsin' the devil in less than five minutes. The man was a deserter and a renegade, so it served him right, but being an Irishman, you see, he distinguished himself—that's all I mean to infer.

The young officer was exceedingly attentive to an anecdote which, thus told by its bronzed, war-worn, and soldier-like narrator, possessed the fascination of romance with the interest of reality.

Lord Bearwarden and his guests had also broken off their conversa-

tion to listen—they returned to the previous subject.

'There are so many people come to town now-a-days,' said his lordship, 'that the whole thing spoils itself. Society is broken up into sets, and even if you belong to the same set, you cannot insure meeting any particular person at any particular place. Just the same with clubs. I might hunt you two fellows about all night, from Arthur's to the Arlington—from the Arlington to White's—from White's to the Carlton—from the Carlton back to St. James's Street—and never run into you at all, unless I had the luck to find you drinking gin and soda at Pratt's.'

Tom Ryfe, belonging only to the last-named of these resorts, looked gratified. Dick Stanmore was thinking of something else.

'Now to-night,' continued Lord Bearwarden, turning to the latter, 'although the ball is in your own stepmother's house, I'll take odds you don't know three-fourths of the people you'll meet, and yet you've been as much about London as most of us. Where they come from I can't think, and they're like the swallows, or the storks, or the woodcocks, only they're not so welcome. Where they'll go to when the season's over I neither know nor care.'

Tom Ryfe would have given much to feel equally indifferent. Something like a pang shot through him as he reflected that for him the battle must be against wind and tide—a fierce struggle more and more hopeless, to grasp at something drifting visibly out of reach. He was not a man, however, to be beat, while it was possible to persist. Believing Dick Stanmore the great obstacle in his way, he watched that preoccupied gentleman as a cat watches a mouse.

'I don't want to be introduced to any more people,' said Dick, rather absently. 'In my opinion you can't have too few acquaintances and too many friends.'

'One ought to know lots of women,' said Mr. Ryfe, assuming the air of a fine gentleman, which fitted him, thought Lord Bear-

warden, as ill as his uniform generally fits a civilian. 'I mean women of position—who give things—whom you'd like to be seen talking to in the Park. As for girls, they're a bore—there's a fresh crop every season—they're exactly like each other, and you have to dance with 'em all!'

'Confound his impudence!' thought Lord Bearwarden. 'Does he hope to impose on me with his half-bred swagger, and Brummagem assurance?' but he only said, 'I suppose, Tom, you're in great request with them—all ranks, all sorts, all ages. You fellows have such a pull over us poor soldiers; you can be improving the time while we're on guard.'

Tom looked as if he rather believed he could. But he only looked it. Beneath that confident manner, his heart was sad and sinking. How bitter he felt against Miss Bruce, and yet he loved her, in his own way too, all the while.

'Champagne to Mr. Stanmore!' said his entertainer, beckoning to a servant. 'You're below the mark, Stanmore, and we've a heavy night before us. You're thinking of your pets at Tattersall's next week. Cheer up. Their future masters won't be half so hard on them, I'll be bound. But I wouldn't assist at the sacrifice if I were you. Come down to the Den with me; we'll troll for pike, and give the clods a cricket-match. Then we'll dine early, set trimmers, and console ourselves with claret cup under affliction.'

Dick laughed. Affliction, indeed, and he had never been so happy in his life! Perhaps that was the reason of his silence, his abstraction. At this very moment, he thought, Maud might be opening the packet he made such sacrifices to redeem. He had arranged for her to receive the diamonds all reset and glittering at the hour she would be dressing for the ball. He could almost fancy he saw the beautiful face flushed with delight, the dark eyes filled with tears. Would she press those jewels to her lips, and murmur broken words of endearment for him? Would

she not love him now, if, indeed, she had not loved him before? Horses, forsooth! What were all the horses that ever galloped compared to one smile of hers? He would have given her his right arm, his life, if she wanted it. And now, perhaps, he was to obtain his reward. Who could tell what that very night might bring forth?

Mr. Stanmore's glass remained untasted before him, and Lord Bearwarden observing that dinner was over, and his guests seemed disinclined to drink any more wine, proposed an adjournment to the little mess-room to smoke.

In these days the long sittings that delighted our grandfathers have completely given way to an early break up, a quiet cigar, and a general retreat, if not to bed, at least to other scenes and other society. In ten minutes from the rising of the colonel, Lord Bearwarden, and half a dozen guests, the larger mess-room was cleared of its inmates, and the smaller one crowded with an exceedingly merry and rather noisy assemblage.

'Just one cigar,' said Lord Bearwarden, handing a huge case to his friends. 'It will steady you nicely for waltzing, and some eau-de-Cologne in my room will take off all the smell afterwards. I know you dancing swells are very particular.'

Both gentlemen laughed, and putting large cigars into their mouths, accommodated themselves with exceeding goodwill to the arrangement.

It was not in the nature of things that silence should be preserved under such incentives to conversation as tobacco and soda-water with something in it, but presently, above other sounds, a young voice was heard to clamour for a song.

'Let's have a chant!' protested this eager voice. 'The night is still young. We're all musical, and we don't often get the two best pipes in the regiment to dine here the same day. Come, tune up, old boy. Give us "Twisting Jane," or the "Gallant Young Hussar."'

The 'old boy' addressed, a large, fine-looking man, holding the appointment of riding-master, smiled

good-humouredly, and shook his head. 'It's too early for "The Hussar,"' said he, scanning the fresh, beardless face with its clear, mirthful eyes. 'And it's not an improving song for young officers, neither. I'll try "Twisting Jane," if you, gentlemen, will support me with the chorus,' and in a deep, mellow voice, he embarked without more ado on the following barrack-room ditty:—

I loved a girl, down Windsor way,  
When we was lying there,  
As soft as silk, as mild as May,  
As timid as a hare.  
She blushed and smiled, looked down so shy,  
And then—looked up again—  
My comrades warned me—"Mind your eye,  
With Twisting Jane!"

'I wooed her thus, not sure but slow,  
To kiss she vowed a crime,—  
For she was "reining back," you know,  
While I was "marking time."  
"Alas!" I thought, "these dainty charms  
Are not for me, 'tis plain;  
Too long she keeps me under arms,  
Does Twisting Jane."

'Our corporal-major says to me,  
One day before parade,  
"She's gammoning you, young chap," says he,  
'Is that there artful jade!  
You'll not be long of finding out,  
When nothing's left to gain,  
How quick the word is "Threes about!"  
With Twisting Jane!"

Our corporal-major knows what's what;  
I peeped above her blind,  
The tea was made—the toast was hot—  
She looked so sweet and kind.  
My captain in her parlour sat,  
It gave me quite a pain!  
With coloured clothes, and shining hat,  
By Twisting Jane.

'The major he came cantering past,  
She bustled out to see,—  
"Oh, major! is it you at last?  
Step in and take your tea?"  
The major halted—winked his eye—  
Looked up and down the lane,—  
And in he went his luck to try  
With Twisting Jane.

'I walked at "attention" there,  
Thinks I, "There'll soon be more,"  
The colonel's phaeton and pair  
Came grinding to the door.  
She gave him such a sugary smile,  
(Old men is very vain!)  
"It's you I looked for all the while,"  
Says Twisting Jane.

"I've done with you for good," I cri'd,  
"You're never on the square;  
Fight which you please on either side,  
But hang it, lass, fight fair!

I won't be last—I can't be first—  
So look for me in vain  
When next you're out 'upon the burst,'  
Miss Twisting Jane!—  
When next you're out 'upon the burst,'  
Miss Twisting Jane!"

'A jolly good song,' cried the affable young gentleman who had instigated the effort, adding, with a quaint glance at the grizzled visage and towering proportions of the singer, 'you're very much improved, old chap—not so shy, more power, more volume. If you mind your music, I'll get you a place as a chorister-boy in the Chapel Royal, after all. You're just the size, and your manners the very thing!'

'Wait till I get you in the school with that new charger,' answered the other, laughing. 'I think, gentlemen, it's my call. I'll ask our adjutant here to give us "Boots and Saddles," you all like that game.'

Tumblers were arrested in mid-air, cigars taken from smooth or hairy lips, while all eyes were turned towards the adjutant, a soldier down to his spurs, who 'tuned up,' as universally requested, without delay.

#### BOOTS AND SADDLES.

'The ring of a bridle, the stamp of a hoof,  
Stars above, and a wind in the tree,—  
A bush for a billet—a rock for a roof,—  
Outpost duty's the duty for me!  
Listen. A stir in the valley below—  
The valley below is with riflemen crammed,  
Covering the column and watching the foe—  
Trumpet-major!—Sound and be d—d!  
Stand to your horses!—It's time to begin—  
Boots and Saddles! The Pickets are in!

'Though our bivouac fire has smouldered away,  
Yet a bit of good 'bacsy shall comfort us  
well;  
When you sleep in your cloak there's no  
lodging to pay,  
And where we shall breakfast the devil can  
tell!  
But the horses were fed, 'ere the daylight had  
gone,  
There's a slice in the embers—a drop in the  
can—  
Take a suck of it, comrade! and so pass it on,  
For a ration of brandy puts heart in a man.  
Good liquor is scarce, and to waste it a sin,—  
Boots and saddles! The Pickets are in!

'Hark! there's a shot from the crest of the  
hill!  
Look! there's a rocket leaps high in the air.  
By the beat of his gallop, that's nearing us  
still,  
That runaway horse has no rider, I'll swear!

There's a jolly light-infantry post on the right.  
 I hear their bugles—they sound the "Advance."  
 They will tip us a tune that shall wake up the night,  
 And we're hardly the lads to leave out of the dance.  
 They're at it already, I'm sure, by the din,—  
 Boots and Saddles! The Pickets are in!  
 'They don't give us long our divisions to prove—  
 Short, sharp, and distinct, comes the word of command.  
 "Have your men in the saddle—Be ready to move—  
 Keep the squadron together—the horses in hand—"  
 While a whisper's caught up in the ranks as they form—  
 A whisper that fain would break out in a cheer—  
 How the foe is in force, how the work will be won.  
 But, steady! the chief gallops up from the rear.  
 With old "Death-or-Glory" to fight is to win,  
 And the Colonel means mischief, I see by his grin.—  
 Boots and Saddles! The Pickets are in!—  
 Boots and Saddles! The Pickets are in!

'And it must be "Boots and Saddles" with us,' said Lord Bearwarden to his guests as the applause subsided and he made a move towards the door, 'otherwise we shall be the "lads to leave out of the dance," and I fancy that would suit none of us to-night.'

## CHAPTER XV.

MRS. STANMORE AT HOME.

DANCING.

Amongst all the magnificent toilettes composed to do honour to the lady whose card of invitation heads this chapter none appeared more variegated in colour, more startling in effect, than that of Mrs. Puckers the maid.

True, circumstances compelled her to wear a high dress, but even this modest style of costume in the hands of a real artist admits of marvellous combinations and extraordinary breadth of treatment. Mrs. Puckers had disposed about her person as much ribbon, tulle, and cheap jewellery as might have fitted

out a fancy fair. Presiding in a little breakfast-room off the hall, pinning tickets on short red cloaks, shaking out skirts of wondrous fabrication, and otherwise assisting those beautiful guests who constituted the entertainment, she afforded a sight only equalled by her after-performances in the tea-room, where, assuming the leadership of a body of handmaidens, almost as smart as herself, she formed, for several wag-gish and irreverent young gentlemen, a principal attraction in that favourite place of resort.

A ball is so far like a run with fox-hounds that it is difficult to specify the precise moment at which the sport begins. Its votaries gather by twos and threes attired for pursuit; there is a certain amount of refitting practised, as regards dress and appointments, while some of the keenest in the chase are nevertheless the latest arrivals at the place of meeting. Presently are heard a note or two, a faint flourish, a suggestive prelude. Three or four couples get cautiously to work, the music swells, the pace increases, ere long the excitement extends to all within sight or hearing, and a performance of exceeding speed, spirit, and severity is the result.

Puckers, with her mouth full of pins, is rearranging the dress of a young lady in her first season, to whom, as to the inexperienced hunter, that burst of music is simply maddening. She is a well-bred young lady, however, and keeps her raptures to herself, but is slightly indignant at the very small notice taken of her by Dick Stanmore, who rushes into the tiring-room, drops a flurried little bow, and hurries Puckers off into a corner, totally regardless of the displeasure with which a calm, cold-looking chaperon regards this unusual proceeding.

'Did it come in time?' says Dick in a loud agitated whisper. 'Did you run up with it directly? Was she pleased? Did she say anything? Has she got them on now?'

'Lor, Mr. Stanmore!' exclaims Puckers, 'whatever do you mean?'

'Miss Bruce—the diamonds,' explains Dick, in a voice that causes two dandies, recently arrived, to

pause in astonishment on the staircase.

'Oh! the diamonds!' answers Puckers. 'Only think now. Was it you, sir? Well, I never. Why, sir, when Miss Bruce opens the packet, not half an hour ago, the tears comes into her eyes, and she says, "Well, this is kind"—them was her very words—"this is kind," says she, and pops 'em on that moment; for I'd done her hair and all. Go upstairs, Mr. Stanmore, and see how she looks in them. I'll wager she's waiting for Somebody to dance with her this very minute!'

Though it is too often of sadly short duration, every man has his 'good time' for a few blissful seconds during life. Let him not complain they are so brief. It is something to have at least tasted the cup, and perhaps it is better to turn with writhing lip from the bitter drop near the brim than, drinking it fairly out, to find its sweets pall on the palate, its essence cease to warm the heart and stimulate the brain.

Dick, hurrying past his mother into the soft, mellow, yet brilliant radiance of her crowded ball-room, felt for that moment the happiest man in London.

Miss Bruce was not waiting to dance with him, according to her maid's prediction, but was performing a waltz in exceeding gravity, assisted, as Dick could not help observing with a certain satisfaction, by the ugliest man in the room. The look she gave him when their eyes met at last sent this shortsighted young gentleman up to the seventh heaven. It seemed well worth all the hunters in Leicestershire, all the diamonds in Golconda! He did the honours of his step-mother's house, and thanked his own friends for coming, but all with the vague consciousness of a man in a dream. Presently the 'round' dance came to an end, much to the relief of the ugly man, who cared, indeed, for ladies as little as ladies cared for him, and Dick hastened to secure Miss Bruce as a partner for the approaching 'square.' She was engaged, of course, six deep, but she put off all her claimants and took

Mr. Stanmore's arm. 'He's my cousin, you know,' said she, with her rare smile, 'and cousins don't count; so you're all merely put back one. If you don't like it, you needn't come for it—*C'est tout simple!*'

Then they took their places, and the dark eyes looked full into his own. Dick felt he was winning in a canter.

Miss Bruce put her hand on the collar of diamonds round her neck. 'I'm glad you're not my cousin,' she said; 'I'm glad you're not really a relation. You're far dearer as it is. You're the best friend and truest gentleman I ever met in my life. Now I shan't thank you any more. Mind your dancing, and set to that gawky woman opposite. Isn't she badly dressed?'

How could Dick tell? He didn't even know he had a *vis-à-vis*, and the 'gawky woman,' as Miss Bruce most unjustly called her, only wondered anybody could make such blunders in so simple a figure as the *Eté*. His head was in a whirl. A certain chivalrous instinct warned him that this was no time, while his idol lay under a heavy obligation, to press his suit. Yet he could not, for the life of him, help venturing a word.

'I look at nobody but you,' he answered, turning pale as men do when they are in sad earnest. 'I should never wish to see any other face than yours for the rest of my life.'

'How tired you'd get of it,' said she, with a bright smile; but she timed her reply so as to embark immediately afterwards on the *Chaine des Dames*, a measure exceedingly ill calculated for sustained conversation, and changed the subject directly she returned to his side.

'Where did you dine?' she asked, saucily. 'With those wild young men at the barracks, I suppose. I knew you would; and you did all sorts of horrid things, drank and smoked—I'm sure you smoked.' She put her laced handkerchief laughingly to her nose.

'I dined with Bearwarden,' answered honest Dick, 'and he's coming on here directly with a lot of them. My mother will be so

pleased—it's going to be a capital ball.'

'I thought Lord Bearwarden never went to balls,' replied the young lady, carelessly; but her heart swelled with gratified vanity to think of the attraction that drew him now to every place where he could hear her voice and look upon her beauty.

'There he is,' was her partner's comment, as his lordship's head appeared in the doorway. 'We'll have one more dance, Miss Bruce—Maud—before the night is over?'

'As many as you please,' was her answer, and still Dick felt he had the race in hand and was winning in a canter.

People go to balls for pleasure, no doubt, but it must be admitted, nevertheless, that the pleasure they seek there is of a delusive kind and lasts but for a few minutes at a time.

Mr. Stanmore's whole happiness was centred in Miss Bruce, yet it was impossible for him to neglect all his stepmother's guests because of his infatuation for one, nor would the usages of society's Draconic laws, that are not to be broken, permit him to haunt that one presence, which turned to magic a scene otherwise only ludicrous for an hour or so, and simply wearisome as it went on.

So Dick plunged into the thick of it, and did his duty manfully, diving at partners right and left, yet, with a certain characteristic loyalty, selecting the least attractive amongst the ladies for his attentions. Thus it happened that as the rooms became crowded, and half the smartest people in London surged and swayed upon the staircase, he lost sight of the face he loved for a considerable period, and was able to devote much real energy to the success of his stepmother's ball, uninfluenced by the distraction of Miss Bruce's presence.

This young lady's movements, however, were not unobserved. Puckers, from her position behind the cups and saucers, enjoyed great reconnoitring opportunities, which she did not suffer to escape unimproved—the tea-room, she was

aware, held an important place in the working machinery of society, as a sort of neutral territory, between the cold civilities of the ball-room and the warmer interest fostered by juxtaposition in the boudoir, not to mention a wicked little alcove beyond, with low red velvet seats, and a subdued light suggestive of whispers and provoking question rather than reply.

Puckers was not easily surprised. In the housekeeper's room she often thanked her stars for this desirable immunity, and indeed on the present occasion had furnished a loving couple with tea, whose united ages would have come hard upon a century, without moving a muscle of her countenance, albeit there was something ludicrous to general society in the affectation of concealment with which this long-recognised attachment had to be carried on. The gentleman was bald and corpulent. The lady—well, the lady had been a beauty thirty years ago, and dressed the character still. There was nothing to prevent their seeing each other every day and all day long, if they chose, yet they preferred scheming for invitations to the same places, that they might meet *en evidence* before the public, and dearly loved, as now, a retirement into the tea-room, where they could enact their rôle of turtle-doves, uninterrupted, yet not entirely unobserved.

Perhaps, after all, this imaginary restraint afforded the little spice of romance that preserved their attachment from decay.

Puckers, I say, marvelled at these not at all, but she did marvel, and admitted it, when Miss Bruce, entering the tea-room, was seen to be attended, not by Mr. Stanmore, but by Lord Bearwarden.

Her dark eyes glittered, and there was an exceedingly becoming flush on the girl's fair face, usually so pale. Her maid thought she had never seen Maud look so beautiful, and to judge by the expression of his countenance, it would appear Lord Bearwarden thought so too. They had been dancing together, and he seemed to be urging her to dance with him again. His lordship's manner was



more eager than common, and in his eyes came an anxious expression that only one woman, the one woman it was so difficult to forget, had ever been able to call into them before.

'Look odd!' he repeated while he set down her cup and gave her back the fan he had been holding. 'I thought you were above all that, Miss Bruce, and did what you liked, without respect to the fools who stare, and can't understand.'

She drew up her head with a proud gesture peculiar to her. 'How do you know I do like it?' said she, haughtily.

He looked hurt and lowered his voice to a whisper. 'Forgive me,' he said, 'I have no right to suppose it. I have been presumptuous, and you are entitled to be unkind. I have monopolized you too much, and you're—you're bored with me. It's my own fault.'

'I never said so,' she answered in the same tone; 'who is unkind now?' Then the dark eyes were raised for one moment to look full in his, and it was all over with Lord Bearwarden.

'You will dance with me again before I go,' said he, recovering his former position with an alacrity that denoted some previous practice. 'I shall ask nobody else—why should I? You know I only came here to see you. One waltz, Miss Bruce—promise!'

'I promise,' she answered, and again came into her eyes that smile which so fascinated her admirers to their cost. 'I shall get into horrid disgrace for it, and so I shall for sitting here so long now. I'm always doing wrong. However, I'll risk it if you will.'

Her manner was playful, almost tender; and Puckers, adding another large infusion of tea, wondered to see her look so soft and kind.

A crowded waltz was in course of performance, and the tea-room, but for this preoccupied couple, would have been empty. Two men looked in, as they passed the door, the one hurried on in search of his partner, the other started, bowed, and turned back amongst the crowd. Puckers the lynx-eyed, observing and recognizing both, had sufficient skill in

physiognomy to pity Mr. Stanmore and much mistrust Tom Ryfe.

The former, indeed, felt a sharp keen pang, when he saw the face that so haunted him in close proximity to another face belonging to one who, if he should enter for the prize, could not but prove a dangerous rival. Nevertheless, the man's generous instincts stifled and kept down so unworthy a suspicion, forcing himself to argue against his own conviction that, at this very moment, the happiness of his life was hanging by a thread. He resolved to ignore everything of the kind. Jealousy was a bad beginning for a lover, and after all, if he should allow himself to be jealous of every man who admired and danced with Maud, life would be unbearable. How despicable, besides, would she hold such a sentiment! With her disposition, how would she resent anything like *espionage* or *surveillance*? How unworthy it seemed both of herself and of him! In two minutes he was heartily ashamed of his momentary discomfiture, and plunged energetically once more into the duties of the ball-room. Nevertheless, from that moment, the whole happiness of the evening had faded out for Dick.

There is a light irradiating all such gatherings which is totally irrespective of gas or wax-candles. It can shed a mellow lustre on dingy rooms, frayed carpets, and shabby furniture; nay, I have seen its tender rays impart a rare and spiritual beauty to an old, worn, long-loved face; but on the other hand, when this magic light is quenched or even temporarily shaded, not all the illuminations of a royal birthday are brilliant enough to dispel the gloom its absence leaves about the heart.

Mr. Stanmore, though whirling a very handsome young lady through a waltz, began to think it was not such a good ball after all.

Tom Ryfe, on the other hand, congratulated himself on his tactics in having obtained an invitation, not without considerable pressure put upon Miss Bruce, for a gathering, of which his social standing hardly entitled him to form a part. He

was now, so to speak, on the very ground occupied by the enemy, and though he saw defeat imminent, could at least make his own effort to avert it. After all his misgivings as regarded Stanmore, it seemed that he had been mistaken, and that Lord Bearwarden was the rival he ought to dread. In any case but his own, Mr. Ryfe was a man of the world quite shrewd enough to have reasoned that in this duality of admirers there was encouragement and hope. But Tom had lost his heart, such as it was, and his head, though of much better material, had naturally gone with it. Like other gamblers, he determined to follow his ill-luck to the utmost, bring matters to a crisis, and so know the worst. In all graver affairs of life, it is doubtless good sense to look a difficulty in the face; but in the amusements of love and play practised hands leave a considerable margin for that uncertainty which constitutes the very essence of both pastimes; and this is why, perhaps, the man in earnest has the worst chance of winning at either game.

So Tom Ryfe turned back into the crowd and waited his opportunity for a few minutes' conversation with Miss Bruce.

It came at last. She had danced through several engagements, the night was waning, and a few carriages had already been called up. Maud occupied the extreme end of a bench, from which a party of ladies had just risen to go away; she had declined to dance, and for the moment was alone. Tom slipped into the vacant seat by her side and thus cut her off from the whole surrounding world. A waltz requiring much terrific accompaniment of brass instruments pealed out its deafening strains within ten feet of them, and in no desert island could there have been less likelihood that their conversation would be overheard.

Miss Bruce looked very happy, and in thorough good-humour. Tom Ryfe opened the trenches quietly enough.

'You haven't danced with me the whole evening,' said he, with only rather a bitter inflection of voice.

'You never asked me,' was the natural rejoinder.

'And I'm not going to ask you now,' proceeded Mr. Ryfe; 'you and I, Miss Bruce, have something more than a mere dancing acquaintance, I think.'

An impatient movement, a slight curl of the lip, was the only answer.

'You may drop an acquaintance when you are tired of him, or a friend when he gets troublesome. It's done every day. It's very easy, Miss Bruce.'

He spoke in a tone of irony that roused her.

'Not so easy,' she answered, with tightening lips, 'when people have no tact—when they are not *gentlemen*.'

The taunt went home. The beauty of Mr. Ryfe's face was at no time in its expression—certainly not now. Miss Bruce, too, seemed well disposed to fight it out. Obviously it must be war to the knife!

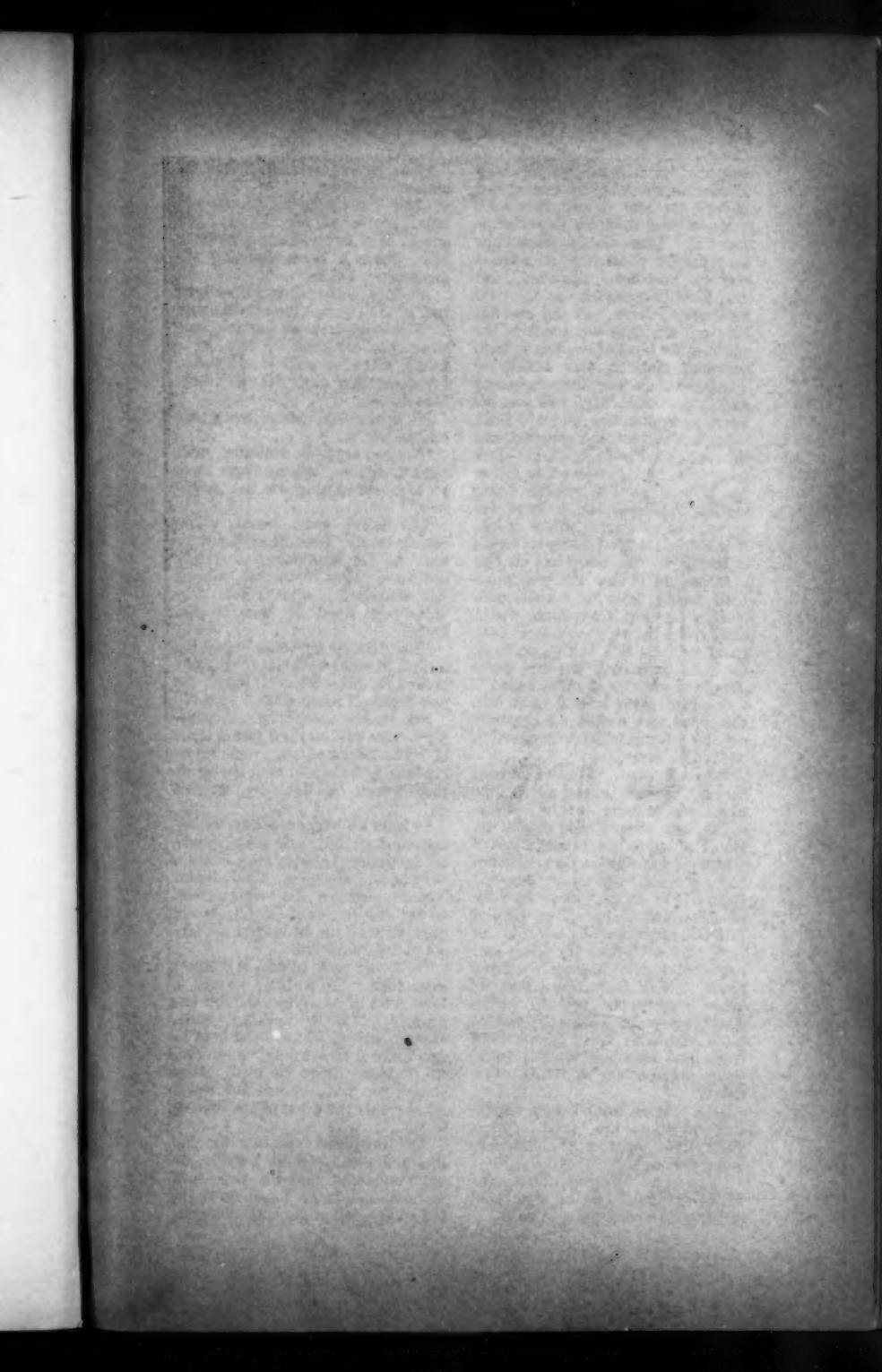
'Did you get my letter?' said he, in low, distinct syllables. 'Do you believe I mean what I say? Do you believe I mean what I *write*?'

She smiled scornfully. A paating couple who stopped just in front of them imagined they were interrupting a flirtation, and, doing as they would be done by, twirled on.

'I treat all begging-letters alike,' answered Maud, 'and make yours no exception, because they contain threats, and abuse into the bargain. You have chosen the wrong person to try and frighten, Mr. Ryfe. It only shows how little you understand my character.'

He would have caught at a straw even then. 'How little chance I have had of studying it!' he exclaimed. 'It is not my fault. Heaven knows I have been kept in ignorance, uncertainty, suspense, till it almost drove me mad. Miss Bruce, you have known the worst of me; only the worst of me, indeed, as yet.'

The man was pleading for his life, you see. Was it pitiable, or only ludicrous, that his voice and manner had to be toned down to the staid pitch of general conversa-





Drawn by W. H. Lawson.]

THE ANSWER IN THE TEA-ROOM.





Photo. (H. J. H. H. H.)

THE KNIGHT IN THE TEA ROOM



tion, that a fat and happy German was puffing at a cornet-à-piston within arm's-length of him? But for a quiver of his lip, any bystander might have supposed he was asking Miss Bruce if he should bring her an ice.

'I have seen enough!' she replied, very resolutely, 'and I am determined to see no more. Mr. Ryfe, if you have no pleasanter subjects of conversation than yourself and your arrangements, I will ask you to move for an instant that I may pass, and find Mrs. Stanmore.'

Lord Bearwarden was at the other end of the room, looking about, apparently, for some object of unusual interest. Perhaps Miss Bruce saw him—as ladies do see people without turning their eyes—and the sight fortified her resolution.

'Then you defy me!' whispered Tom, in the low suppressed tones that denote rage, concentrated and intensified for being kept down. 'By Heaven, Miss Bruce, you shall repent it! I'll show you up! I'll expose you! I'll have neither pity nor remorse! You think you've won a heavy stake, do you? Hooked a big fish, and need only pull him ashore? He shan't be deceived! He shall know you for what you are! He shall by —!'

The adjuration with which Mr. Ryfe concluded this little ebullition was fortunately drowned to all ears but those for which it was intended by a startling flourish on the cornet-à-piston. Miss Bruce accepted the challenge readily. 'Do your worst!' said she, rising with a scornful bow, and taking Lord Bearwarden's arm,

much to that gentleman's delight, walked haughtily away.

Perhaps this declaration of open war may have decided her subsequent conduct; perhaps it was only the result of those circumstances which form the meshes of a certain web we call Fate. Howbeit, Miss Bruce was too tired to dance. Miss Bruce would like to sit down in a cool place. Miss Bruce would not be bored with Lord Bearwarden's companionship, not for an hour, not for a week—no, not for a lifetime!

Dick Stanmore, taking a lady down to her carriage, saw them sitting alone in the tea-room, now deserted by Puckers and her assistants. His honest heart turned very sick and cold. Half an hour after, passing the same spot, they were there still; and then, I think, he knew that he was overtaken by the first misfortune of his life.

Later, when the ball was over, and he had wished Mrs. Stanmore good-night, he went up to Maud with a grave, kind face.

'We never had our waltz, Miss Bruce,' said he; 'and—and—there's a reason, isn't there?'

He was white to his very lips. Through all her triumph, she felt a twinge, far keener than she expected, of compunction and remorse.

'Oh, Dick!' she said, 'I couldn't help it! Lord Bearwarden proposed to me in that room.'

'And you accepted him?' said Dick, trying to steady his voice, wondering why he felt half suffocated all the time.

'And I accepted him!'



## THE PICCADILLY PAPERS.

BY A PERIPATETIC.

## THE RING AND THE BOOK.\*

WE do not profess to belong to the number of the very ardent admirers of Mr. Browning, of those who consider that Tennyson is weak and emaculated, that Swinburne is a musical rhetorician, and that strength and genius have found their culmination in Browning alone. Neither do we belong to those who maintain the sturdy opinion that Mr. Browning exists in a chronic state of intellectual fog; that he is obscure to his readers because his conceptions are obscure to himself; that he revels in words to which no clear sense is ordinarily attached. It is necessary to arbitrate between such conflicting views, and such a work as the 'Ring and the Book' is a rebuke to either extreme opinion. This enormous poem, of many thousand lines, is indeed a most substantial addition to the literature of our age, a work, we will venture to predicate, which will never be popular among ordinary readers, and which will also never be left unread by those who wish to comprehend one of the most complex and remarkable intellectual efforts of our time. Hardly any one but Mr. Browning would have ventured to have published such a poem in four consecutive volumes. A great deal of premature criticism was wasted on the appearance of the first. The admirers were loud in their admiration; but it was an admiration uncritical and indiscriminate, and could not have been justified until Mr. Browning had developed his conceptions in the succeeding parts. There was more reason, indeed, for the adverse criticism, but as the poet's design has attained its full perfection, many of the strictures will lose their relevancy, and something of the admiration has also become unintelligible.

There is still some force in the

\* 'The Ring and the Book.' By Robert Browning, M.A. In Four Vols. Smith and Elder.

observation that the poet has taken a remarkable case out of the Italian Newgate Calendar. But how wonderfully the treatment has redeemed the subject, and given us a gallery of portraiture grand, subtle, and of incomparable force! Still it is like the famous picture of the Caracchi family in the library of Christ Church, where the interior is a butcher's shop and all the artists are butchers. Throughout the poem, despite the artistic merit, despite the portraiture, butchers and victims form the subject, and the red smear of bloodshed is on every page. The repellent story is presented with every variety of presentment. At first the plot seemed lengthy and complicated, but it is shown in so many cross lights, in so many narratives, in so many comments, in such varying aspects of varying minds, in such contemporary gossip and barristerial ingenuity, that we become somewhat sated and weary with the familiar details. It is with the utmost relief that we alight on that splendid monologue of the Caponsacchi speech which first fully indicates the ultimate grandeur of the poem. The exquisite simplicity, purity, and pathos of Pompilia, is evidenced almost at the beginning in the tender passage beginning

'Oh, how good God is that my babe was born!'

and there is something both human and divine in the flush of her pure love for her delivering priest, like sunset upon alpine ice and snow, the looking forward to that eternal state when there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage. In violent contrast with this simplicity, the result of the poet's intensest and highest art, are the rival speeches of the two lawyers, Hyacinthus de Archangelis and Johannes Baptista Bottinus. Whatever Mr. Browning has of ingenuity, of logomachy, of sophistic reasoning, of verbal license, is here carried to absolute revelry,

the foil to passion, the Margites element in the epic, the comic Parabasis rudely introduced into the tragedy. There is an immense quantity of Latin, which need not, however, frighten the ladies, as the poet, *seriatim*, translates all the phrases into free English, and the poem now resembles nothing so much as the end of the Eton Latin Grammar, where the prosody is constructed into the vernacular. The Procurator Panperum, overflowing with love for his little eight-year old boy, and with professional rivalry against his opponent the Fiesco, and all the while that he is working out Guido's case, intent upon his dinner of lamb's fry and Rosolio wine, and then the fun, as in Mr. Browning's manner, suddenly becoming earnest, as he rejoices in home sanctitudes, is, though highly curious, out of place, and would easily bear excision from the poem. The fourth volume is in every respect the worthiest of the quaternion. The Pope's monologue is the highest part of the whole work, the highest tones to which Mr. Browning, or any poet of our day, has ever attained. We by no means agree in the somewhat disparaging estimate that has been made of the second Guido speech. There is a sulphurous odour about it, indeed, redolent of the pit, but it is unsurpassable in energy and passion, and we only place it below the pontiff's because the piety, insight, wisdom, and greatness in the pope's speech are so much richer food for contemplation. It is thus he settles the main issue of the story, by sending his rescript for the execution of Guido and his assassins as soon as may be.

'For the main criminal I have no hope,  
Except in such a suddenness of fate.  
I stood at Naples once, a night so dark  
I could have scarce conjectured there was earth  
Anywhere; sky, or sea, or world at all;  
But the night's black was burst through by a blaze—  
Thunder struck blow on blow, earth groaned  
and bore  
Through her whole length of mountain visible.  
There lay the city thick and plain with spires,  
And, like a ghost disbrowed, white the sea.  
So may the truth be flashed out by one blow,  
And Guido see, one instant, and be saved.

Else I avert my face, nor follow him  
Into that sad, obscure, sequestered state  
Where God unmakes but to remake the soul  
He else made first in vain; which must not be  
Enough, for I may die this very night,  
And how should I dare die, this man let live?  
Carry this forthwith to the Governor.'

Throughout the pope's speech there is as pure an air as Pompilia's own and higher thought. There is a vein of simple, natural piety about the good old man which would appear strange to undiluted Protestantism. There is his fatherly joy over the endurance of Pompilia.

'Not the escape by way of sin. O God,  
Who shall pluck sheep Thou holdest from  
Thy hand!'

'Ten years a gardener of the untoward ground  
I till; this earth, my sweat and blood manure  
All the long day that barrenly grows dusk:  
At least one blossom makes me proud at eve,  
Born 'mid the briars of my enclosure.'

'My flower,  
My rose, I gather for the breast of God.'

And so, too, in his loving admiration and acquittal of Caponsacchi. 'Work, be unhappy, but bear life, my son.' Here is a satiric touch that belongs to our age as much as to the age of Pope Innocent.

'There's a new tribunal now,  
Higher than God's,—the educated man's?  
Nice sense of honour in the human breast  
Supersedes here the old coarse oracle,  
Confirming handsomely a point or so,  
Wherein the predecessor worked aright  
By rule of thumb, as when Christ said,' &c.

There is in the pope a deep vein of religion, or what may be called the metaphysics of religion, as when he meditates how pain is the machinery designed to evolve the moral qualities of man, or when he grapples with the reasoning which he attributes, hardly historically, to Euripides. There is here warm imagining, real devoutness, and keen argument, eminently calculated to stimulate thought. There is, however, a kind of obscurity, partly due to condensation of thought and language, and partly, we cannot but think, to some indistinctness in the poet's own ideas. We may here remark that when he apostrophises 'Lyric Love' in two remarkable passages, it is not quite clear, perhaps designedly so, whether he means the

great poetess England has lost in his loss.

We had marked many passages for quotation, but our limits only permit us to cull a few. For the intensity of hate and energy it is impossible to surpass the conclusion of Caponsacchi's words, in which he predicts the meeting and companionship of Count Guido and Iscariot in the nethermost portion of Hades. At times our poet is so forcible that he becomes coarse, and there are some passages that are unquotable. But then there are many that are so very much the reverse. Here are a few.

'Doth wrapped up in the love of their one child,  
The strange, tall, pale, beautiful creature  
    grown  
Lily-like out o' the cleft i' the sun-sunt rock,  
To bow its white, miraculous birth of buds  
I' the way of wandering Joseph and his  
    spouse,—  
So painters fancy : here it was a fact.  
And this their lily,—could they but transplant,  
And set in vase to stand by Solomon's porch,  
'Twixt lion and lion.'

'There was no duty patent in the world  
Like daring try be good and true myself,  
Leaving the shows of things to the Lord of  
    show  
And Prince o' the power of the air.'

There is a strong vein of humour at times, as in Count Guido's grim jesting about the torture. So in a speech Caponsacchi says his bishop made to him.

'I have a heavy scholar cloistered up  
Close under lock and key, kept at his task  
Of letting Fenelon know the fool he is,  
In a book I promise Christendom next spring.  
Why, if he covets so much the meat, the claws  
As a lark's wing next Friday, or any day  
Diversion beyond catching his own fleas,  
He shall be properly swunged, I promise him.'

The following is an example of simple narratives, where Count Guido gives the origin of his family arms:—

'Tis said a certain ancestor of mine  
Followed whoever was the potentate  
To Paynimrie, and in some battle broke  
Through more than due allowance of the foe,  
And risking much his own life, saved the  
    lord's.  
Battered and bruised, the Emperor scrambled  
    up,  
Rubs his eyes and looks round, and sees my  
    sire,  
Picks a furze-sprig from out his hauberk-joint,

(Token how near the ground went majesty.)  
And says, "Take this, and, if thou get safe  
    home,  
Plant the same in thy garden-ground to grow ;  
Run thence an hour in a straight line and stop ;  
Describe a circle round (for central point)  
The furze aforesaid, reaching every way  
The length of that hour's run. I give it thee,—  
The central point to build a castle there,  
The circumjacent space for fit demesne,  
The whole to be thy children's heritage,  
Whom for my sake bid them wear furze on  
    cap!"  
These are my arms: we tamed the furze to  
    true  
To show mare and the greyhound tied thereto,  
Straining to start means swift and greedy  
    both.'

We have not busied ourselves with that range of minor criticism to which the work is sufficiently liable, the long involutions of speech, illustrations and sub-illustrations, violences to language and forms of speech, irregular inharmonious rhythm, which Mr. Browning might so easily correct. Greatly, also, should we like some intercalary lyrics, such as he could write so well, to relieve these twenty thousand lines of blank verse. Neither, since Mr. Browning has so greatly advanced beyond his previous works, do we like to complain of the obscurity, which, still to some extent, exists; and since he has shown us that he can be plain and clear enough, we cannot altogether divest this obscurity from the nature of his own conceptions. But let the reader read this great poem, and though he may not greatly care for the first perusal, yet on the second and third it will brighten up greatly for him, and he will find that he has made a solid addition to his intellectual stores, in becoming familiar with one of the most learned, thoughtful, and poetical minds of our age.

#### THE CURABILITY OF ILLNESS SUPPOSED INCURABLE.

The other day, going into the London Library, I took up a book which had been presented to us by our constant visitor, Mr. John Stuart Mill, which treated on the curability of phthisis.\* Every now

\* 'Consumption,' &c. By Henry MacCormack, M.D. Second edition. London : Longmans.

and then, in medicine, some idea is brought before us in the simplicity and vastness of a great discovery. We seem to be trembling on the verge of some mighty disclosure of the mysteries of nature, which has baffled us for ages, and yet whose simplicity makes us wonder that it has ever baffled us at all, and whose curative effect must make a large addition to the average of human life. It would be almost impossible to number up the remedies that have been discovered from those diseases of the chest which are almost the special domain of empirics and enthusiasts. Dr. MacCormack, of Belfast, in this work I have mentioned, writes with an honesty and earnestness which make us long to believe that the great medical discovery of the age has been made. And yet we cannot with sincerity say that we think so. There is much, indeed, in his book which ought to be shouted aloud upon the housetops, but, as usual, this would be the enunciation of old truth, not the promulgation of new. Air, air, fresh air, is the burden of Dr. MacCormack's work, and all physiologists would desire to echo the cry with the utmost intensity. But here we stay. The doctor says that tubercle, which he calls the 'analogue of soot,' is engendered by rebreathed air and consequent arrest of the unconsumed carbonaceous waste, and this doctrine he preaches everywhere with all the zeal of a propagandist. He not only, as all medical men do, preaches on fresh air and free respiration, but he declares that tubercle is deposited by the blood that has not been oxidised, because the same air has been rebreathed. The detention of carbon in the blood is the sole cause of the mischief. This may possibly be, but his case is not strengthened by the way in which he puts some of the details. He recommends all people, however weak, to sleep with their windows open at night; which is healthy enough for strong people, but against which the instinct of invalids revolts. He declares that cod-liver oil is utterly inane and useless in phthisis. We believe that if this is the case there

is an utter end of all evidence and all reasoning in medical science. We are able, from our own observation, to correct a serious misstatement of Dr. MacCormack's. He takes the Scilly Isles, where consumption is, without doubt, alarmingly prevalent, and he says that the reason is, because the inhabitants sleep in chambers, every window closed. We do not think, from our own observation, that this is at all more true of the pretty and prosperous little town in St. Mary's Island than of any large English village. The causes are not far to seek. In the first place—and this alone is sufficient—close intermarriages have prevailed on the islands for generations, and all the inhabitants are related. In addition to this, the atmosphere is very heavily charged with moisture, and what is curious, there seemed to be an immense quantity of floating particles of sand in the air, which must be as deleterious as the dust which is inhaled in so many noxious trades. With the moral of always seeking to breathe pure sweet unbreathed air, we of course thoroughly agree, but many of this writer's statements appear to us to be exaggerated and unsubstantiated.

In a country with a climate like our own phthisis will always possess an absorbing interest for the public. In our judgment by far the most important contribution to this subject made of late years is that by a series of papers which appeared in the 'Lancet' last year, by Dr. C. J. R. Williams, and his son, Dr. C. Theodore Williams. This is a subject where Dr. Williams speaks with pre-eminent authority; and these papers give the brightest and most hopeful view that we have ever seen advanced on authentic testimony. The papers are based on the experience of a large private practice which Dr. Williams has for many years enjoyed. They are much more hopeful than hospital reports, and, generally speaking, hospital cases succeed much less often than house cases, which surely implies that future hospitals ought to be constructed on the plan of a series of houses. Dr. Williams

now greatly lengthens the average duration of life under consumption. It has always been known that phthisis could be occasionally prolonged to an extraordinary extent. Sir William Watson, in his famous work, quotes the late Dr. Gregory (Edinburgh), to the effect that he knew a man who died at seventy-two, who had been ill of phthisis all his life. Sir William adds: 'It has been my melancholy task to watch the long decline and the death, at last, of a statesman who served his country well and strenuously, yet of whose years and health a precisely similar description to this would be true.' Such prolongation is altogether wonderful and abnormal, on which not one in a myriad can count. Those great authorities, Louis and Laennec, put down the average duration at two years, as the limit of the life of the consumptive. Dr. Williams' tables bring out for the first time much more favourable results in the milder forms of consumption than those hitherto attained. He says, that, under careful treatment, life may be prolonged for many years in comfort and usefulness, and in not very few cases the disease is so permanently arrested that it may be called cured. The 500 cases tabulated by Dr. C. T. Williams are especially interesting and valuable, because it is rare indeed that we obtain so clear an insight into an extensive private practice, where, pretty uniformly, the patients have the power of putting themselves into the most favourable conditions for recovery. Of these cases, upwards of one-half had a duration of upwards of ten years. It is delightful to read so many cases, which ordinarily would be regarded hopeless, lasting for ten, thirteen, sixteen, twenty, twenty-five years, or being permanently cured. Such cases form the very triumph of thoughtful judicious treatment, wide experience, and medical remedies. That instinctive hope which clings to the consumptive, may not be altogether without a natural legitimate basis, the instinctive belief that there are remedies in existence if only they could be found. There is now a large

substantial measure of hope—destined, we trust, to be largely increased—which should, most of all, teach, first, caution to anticipate disease, and, secondly, to meet it promptly at once in its earliest stage. We sincerely trust that before long these most valuable papers will be gathered into a separate volume.

In the last of them Dr. Williams gives a summary, which, we need hardly say, is most interesting and instructive. He takes a retrospect of its treatment during the last forty years. In the first decade of that time the only hope seemed to lie in a prolonged voyage to Australia or India. 'My general recollection of the histories of the developed disease at that time is that of distressing tragedies, in which no means used seemed to have any power to arrest the malady. In the next ten there was a marked improvement. Much was done by the habitual use of mild alterative tonics, but more than all other means put together was the immense good wrought by pure cod-liver oil. This has quadrupled the average duration of life in phthisis, and, indeed,' says Dr. Williams, 'this is below the actual results as calculated by my son, for of the 500 cases, 380 were still living at the last report, and many of those are likely to live for many years to come.' Dr. Williams has many interesting remarks on the treatment of consumption. There is a crumb of consolation for sufferers in the fact that this treatment is pretty uniformly of a mild and generous kind. 'Not only the most nutritious food, aided by a judicious use of stimulants and of medicinal tonics, but pure air, with such varied and moderate exercise in it as the strength will bear, and the enlivening influence of bright sunshine, and agreeable scenery, and cheerful society, are among the means best suited to restore the defective functions and structures of frames prone to decay.' From starving the patient, the tendency of late years has been too much, Dr. Williams thinks, to the opposite extreme of stimulants and full diet. Next to the oil, change of





STORIES THAT LIVE AT THE HOUSE OF THE FUTURE.

LIVE IDEAS IN THE FUTURE.

THE HOUSE OF THE FUTURE. THE HOUSE OF THE FUTURE.





STUDIES FROM LIFE AT THE COURT OF ST. JAMES.

LADY DIANA DE VERE BEAUCLEEK.

Drawn by the late George H. Thomas. Engraved by William L. Thomas.



climate is the great desideratum. A warm climate in winter and a high and dry locality in summer, are the great objects. On this point Dr. C. T. Williams has issued a little work on the climate of the south of France, to which Dr. C. J. B. Williams has been of great use, which is a valuable addition to the now considerable literature of climatology. He does not think much of the use of foreign waters, which are sometimes much recommended. He does not care much for such places as Canterbury and Ems. Dr. Williams does not hesitate to express his opinion that continental practitioners are far behind the British in their skill and success in the treatment of disease in general, and of diseases of the chest in particular. Their treatment may be more brilliant, but, unhappily, it is not equally efficacious.

In a country which seems peculiarly selected for the ravages of phthisis, one in eight of all illnesses being this illness, these latest results of medical investigations are peculiarly consolatory. It may be said generally of all disease hitherto supposed incurable, that there is a stage in which such is curable; that in all stages there are palliatives; and that the medical science seems groping through the darkness towards the discovery of specifics which may overtake the influence of what have hitherto seemed to be invincible destroyers.

#### A GROUP OF NOVELS.

There is a pause at present in the production of famous novels. Mr. Dickens is resting on his oars, and to Mr. Thackeray no successor has arisen. There is no serial story which all the world alike is reading and which may supply small talk in the afternoons. We old stagers are waiting to see what the new generation will turn out, and the new generation turns them out fast enough, but as they pass, one after another, we shake our heads and think it will hardly do. Failing our most illustrious novelist we fall back on the second-rate men and the third-rate men, whom we have

known ever so long, and as they have amused us before may amuse us again—our Charles Lever and Anthony Trollope; and as these old favourites still hold their own, and as the horde of younger aspirants do not come near them, we are beginning to hope that the fountain of fiction is running dry and the public are entering on some new phase of literary temper.

What is the reason that we always take so kindly to our Trollope? We take him up with the same sort of luxurious feeling with which we slip into slippers and an easy-chair, to which his pages form so agreeable an accompaniment. One reason is that Mr. Trollope is a man of humble and limited aims, and he knows it. In reading some novels we perceive that the authors are straining and aping into something larger than themselves; but Mr. Trollope, with good sense and breeding, always keeps on the safe side. We read his stories knowing he can do something much better than his stories; he is a man of the world, a keen observer, an extensive traveller, a man of political knowledge and ideas. He could write a book with a great deal of social and moral philosophy in it, but he is philosopher enough to know that such philosophy is best administered in infinitesimal dribbles, to be taken in huge draughts of fiction. And Mr. Trollope is a most industrious man. The Post Office must have been to him a sort of pleasant fiction, and fiction-writing the solid business of life. For months past he has had two solid novels on the stocks—'Phineas Finn' and 'He knew he was right'—and we have read them lazily with a lazy wonder why we should be reading them.

And yet the reason is obvious. Mr. Trollope photographs the average middle-class life from which romance has been too much excluded by romancists. There is all the difference in the world between a great picture and a photograph. It is one thing to study a Turner or a Claude and another to stare at a photograph in the shop window. Yet the photograph has a personal interest which could not possibly

belong to the picture. We see our intimate friend Brown in the most naked veracity, his little eyes, his smug nose, his bald patz, his obstreperous stack of hair. Mr. Trollope goes about photographing the Browns of humanity. But Mr. Trollope not only does the Browns, but he soars into higher regions. As Mr. Trollope has gone up into the world his heroes and heroines have gone up correspondingly. He can hardly very well go beyond Cabinet Ministers and Dukes of Omnium, unless he makes one of the royal princes his hero and lays his scene at German Courts or at Windsor Castle. In his 'Phineas Finn,' in spite of his well-intentioned protest he does in a way adumbrate Mr. Bright under Mr. Monk, and anticipates a future schism in the Cabinet on an Irish land bill. Then Mr. Trollope has his touches of realism, hardly visible but very pungent, realising Sidney Smith's salad lines:

'Let shreds of onion lurk within the bowl,  
And, though unseen, yet animate the whole.'

He has got a sketch of a Cabinet Council, which must have been gleaned from some Cabinet Minister or a hall porter in Downing Street. But we know where we shall find Mr. Trollope's touches of realism—in official life, in foreign sketches, in London parties. In this realism Mr. Trollope is very honest and industrious, always accurate and painstaking. We can ourselves testify to that. The summer before last when the Peripatetic was peripatetic the west country he came a good deal across Mr. Trollope's traces; at Lynton, on the Dart, and other Devonian parts. Mr. Trollope was accumulating literary provender, and it is now elaborated into his partly-Devonshire story '*He knew he was right.*'

But Mr. Trollope has not always got the power of settling stories in a striking way, and generally finishes them off in a negative and merely goody fashion. This was the case with our old friend Lillian Dale. We hold that something definite ought to have been done for Miss Dale. Either she ought to have forgiven

the repentant Crosbie or have rewarded the persevering Eames; in either case there would have been the bracing and elevating influence of a higher on an inferior nature. But to have Lillian Dale an old maid was not a termination according to nature, and Mr. Trollope virtually confessed that he was fairly baffled by those elements of fiction which he had drawn together. Similarly in his 'Phineas Finn,' of which the ladies grow rather tired and often passed over quickly as a 'political novel.' The engagement to Mary Flood Jones is a tame and impotent conclusion. Most novel readers will be of opinion that Mr. Kennedy ought to have been put to death in order that the Irish member might marry his widow, or, barring that, he ought to have married Violet Effingham. But to make him marry a girl for whom he had never really cared, whom he had forgotten, and to whom he proposed in consequence of being a short time in her company at a season of doubt and disappointment—a young woman totally disconnected from the main business of the story, makes the plot a total failure considered as a work of art. Another objection to Mr. Trollope's writings is the uniformly low ethical tone. We look in a novel for something that shall satisfy the instinct for poetic justice. Mr. Trollope never gets beyond the average humanity of us poor worldlings. He has more of Giganity than broad sad humanity about him. But though he thinks lots of money necessary for terrestrial happiness, we thankfully acknowledge that in this mercenary age he does good service by impressively warning young ladies not to marry for money alone. In some measure in the 'Crawley Family' he has reproduced for our day the 'Vicar of Wakefield,' which would be more true if he should cut down his work to the dimensions of the 'Vicar of Wakefield.'

There is more force and freshness about 'That Boy of Norecott's' than has characterised many of Mr. Lever's late works. Young Norecott has the true 'Harry Lorrequer' and 'Charles O'Malley' smack about him. Mr. Lever has a wide cosmo-



politan experience. Her Majesty's Consul at Spezzia has a minute fidelity in all his continental sketches. His description of the little town on the Adriatic and of the great Transylvanian castle will prove a real addition to the stock of most persons' ideas. Mr. T. A. Trollope is an author who uniformly gives an Italian colouring to his stories. But the colouring ought always to be subordinate to dramatic interest, and this is the reason why 'That Boy of Norcott's' is the most pleasing of Mr. Lever's continental stories.

There is a class of novels, many of which are greatly to be deprecated, where the undoubted tendency is not only to be sensuous but sensual. Some writers, in cold blood, deliberately adopt the prurient style with the intention to trade and traffic on the vices and infirmities of humanity. In other cases such stories are the genuine outcome of nature and disposition. In the way of legible lust, perhaps no extant author quite comes up to Mr. Algernon Swinburne. But in this path of fiction Mr. Mortimer Collins makes a very decent or indecent second. Now we have very kindly feeling for Mr. Mortimer Collins. He has a genuine love of letters and a true gift of lyric song. We appreciate Mr. Collins' lyrics very highly, and we think that the public has hardly done justice to him in this respect. It is therefore really distressing to see Mr. Collins, when writing fiction with a cleverness that trenches upon genius, take so avowed a rank in the kingdom of evil. This is only an instance of a class. The novels of 'Ouida,' not to mention other authors and authoresses, lie open to very much the same imputation, although the military descriptions by 'Ouida' make her novels favourites with army men. But even here 'corrup-

tion wins not more than honesty.' Lust made legible is hardly popular with the community at large. Opposed to this is the school of simple narrative, faithful description, close quiet thought, in which a band of female novelists stands pre-eminent, and where such writers as Mr. George Macdonald, despite a certain vagueness and extravagance of thought, deserves to be named, and Miss Yonge, who in a long series of beneficent works has well sustained and carried on that which once seemed to be the special department of Miss Sewell.

We quite grant that the proper function of a novel is not to be goody, and obtrude a sermon in the place of a sentiment. But we cannot regret that the acid of sensuality is neutralized by such an alkali. The novel should supply for us the Comedy of Manner, the new comedy of old Menander, which, with satire, irony, and close observation, possessed also earnestness and purpose. When this is done, the novel may even acquire an historical importance. For instance, the novels of Smollett, the novels of Captain Marryat, and the few stories of Mr. James Hannay, may very well give us a kind of consecutive history of manners in the modern British navy. It is also open to the novelists, if only they could achieve it, to give us the largest exhibition of the workings of passion and motive—which, indeed, all the novelists profess to do, and which is perhaps done, say in one case out of a thousand. These deeper sources of interest are very much neglected in current fiction for the light photographing of fleeting manner and costume, which we only desire may be well done, and with subjects well chosen, until some great genius may again arise to hold an admiring world in laughter or in tears.



## ISIS v. CAM.

By WAT BRADWOOD.

WHAT went they out into the wilderness for to see? The British populace on Wednesday, March 17th. Two eights rowing? They could see a score of them any summer evening, floundering and catching shell-fish on the tideway between Barnes and Wandsworth. To see good rowing? Not one of them in a hundred could have distinguished one crew from the other had they been suddenly painted black and white instead of indigo and azure—or would have been the wiser, but for the uniforms, had the University match at the last been tacitly withdrawn, and a couple of scratch eights of the Leander and London Rowing Clubs gone to the post to make sport for the community.

To see a race? They one and all made up their minds before ever they left their homes, that Oxford could not lose, and five to two against the ever-persevering Light Blue went hopelessly begging!

As far as a *coup d'œil* of rowing—as the sight of a race from start to finish, and not of one only but of ten or a dozen of all sorts and sizes every half-hour, and for scenery and fair summer weather, why did they not keep their energies for Henley Regatta, the Ascot and Goodwood combined, as the University Boat Race is the Derby, of rowing?

They turn out early or late, in fair or foul, for the University Race because it is the standard spectacle of its kind; and one-half the spectacle consists, not only in the race itself, but in the motley masses that throng to the river banks upon the same errand. The bill of fare has been uniform for many years past—challenge, preparation, training, gossip, arrival a Putney, scrutiny, an eve of rest, the race. And its sequel, the lunch of the crews at Mortlake, the dinner in town in the evening, have also been in the same strain without interruption since 1856. Till that year the match, though frequent, had not yet worked itself into an annual groove. And

the uniformity has become almost monotonous on one point, viz., the result; for since the double races of 1849, the one of which Cambridge won by superior condition and the other lost by a foul, Light Blue has thrice only led the way at the winning-post, viz., in '56, '58, and '60. Of intermediate years in which no Putney match took place, viz., '50, '51, '53, and '55, Oxford walked over at Henley in the former, won on the next two occasions, and were beaten by Cambridge on the last. So that of twenty years, four only show a Cambridge superiority, the two Universities having met either at Henley or Putney every one of these years, excepting '50, when, as above explained, Oxford, for reasons doubtless best known to the rowing world of that date, were left alone in their glory at Henley.

The preceding twenty years, from the first University match in '39 till '49, show a marked difference in result. The first match, from Hambleden Lock to Henley Bridge, was easily won by Oxford, who, having gained the toss, had undeniably the best of the station for the first mile to the Pavilion Island. In '36, the match was renewed, and Cambridge won easily, so also in '39, '40, and '41. In '42 Oxford turned the tide and won with a celebrated crew who made the nucleus of the 'glorious seven' in the succeeding year.

In '45 and '46 Cambridge again had the upper hand, and the next Putney match brings us to those already mentioned, of 1849.

Thus up to that point when Oxford won by a foul Cambridge had scored seven matches to Oxford's two. There had, however, been other meetings besides the matches. Oxford had meantime twice beaten Cambridge for the Gold Cup at the Thames Regatta, and of two meetings for the Grand Challenge at Henley each boat won one event; besides two other wins of the Grand Challenge by Oxford, in which Cambridge put in no appearance. The seven-

oar episode in 1843 was not nominally a meeting between the Universities proper, and cannot rank as a match. The Oxonians were a University eight, but the Cantabs were the 'Cambridge Subscription Rooms' of London, comprising oarsmen both past and present, but not necessarily the exact pick of each class, though they had thus double ranks from which to select.

From 1829 to 1839 there had been a custom, so far as we can trace in the absence of authentic records, that the head college boat of each University should meet for a spin over the Henley reach at the close of the summer term. Training was not thought much of in those days, and it was as common as not for the boats to row down from Oxford, fifty miles, to the scene of action, overnight. The only match recorded is that of Queen's College, Oxford v. St. John's, Cambridge, in 1837, won easily by the former.

It was the recurrence of these quasi-University matches, and the desire of other clubs to measure their strength with the Universities (for Cambridge had, to the surprise of the world, beaten the far-famed Leander Club in a match from Westminster to Putney in 1838), that induced the town of Henley to give the Grand Challenge Cup, open to the world, first rowed for in 1839, and which formed the nucleus of future Henley regattas.

Many scientific oarsmen have puzzled their brains to discover the reason why Cambridge, after showing on the whole superiority for the first twenty years of University boat-racing, should in the later twenty have failed to hold its own, and for the last nine years should have been systematically beaten.

The reason probably is, that the small volume of water in the Cam is not so suitable for learning rowing in the modern style of light boats as is the fuller and deeper Iais. Boats drag heavily on narrow and shallow water, and feel as heavy as 'tubs' even when they are racing 'shells.' When, at the last, the crews come to race on deep buoyant water, that crew which is most accustomed to

that style of rowing has manifest advantage.

In olden days boats were so heavy and broad, and offered such resistance to the water of themselves, that the difference between deep and shallow water was not so appreciable; just as two runners shod with heavy hobnailed shooting-boots would not find so much difference between muddy ground and light turf, but if they changed to running-pumps the consistency of the ground on which they practised would make all the difference to the acquirement of proper action and stride.

Secondly, in these days cesspools still existed; the Cam was not a public sewer as it now is, silted a couple of feet shallower than its former normal depth.

Thirdly, Oxford in former days had petty jealousies and disorganizations: till Shadwell and Menzies came to the rescue in 1842, few men were taught to row, or chosen for what they could be made by care and coaching: the latter art was hardly understood. The President who got into office divided his favours among his own school and college friends, and rivalry ran high between ex-Etonians and Westminsterians.

These causes can explain, to a great extent, why Cambridge once had the upper hand and subsequently lost it. Want of success, however, of late years had sown demoralization and want of confidence among Cambridge oarsmen. They changed coach after coach, tactics after tactics, but without improvement; rather the reverse, for they lost even the common appliances of good time of oars and form of body. This year, Mr. G. Morrison, who had, while President of Oxford, trained the winning crews of '61 and '62, went down to Cambridge to coach, at the request of their President, and produced a marked improvement. He brought out a neater crew than the Oxonians, though not so powerful a one, or so *au fait* at rowing a light boat upon deep water. The crew made a good race for two miles, and none can say that, under the circumstances, their defeat was any disgrace. The authorities of Cambridge are now beginning to awake to a sense

of the state of their river, and the work of clearing it out has commenced. By next year, when it will have been deepened and widened, if Cambridge will row in as good form as they did this year, with as able a coach to guide them, they will as likely as not regain their old pride of place.

The race this year was a very pretty one up to Chiswick Eyot; the pace of both boats was above the average, far greater than that of the preceding year, and few of the accompanying steamers saw much of the struggle. Oxford got the best of the start, and led more or less the whole way to Craven Point and into the shoot beyond it. The steering of both boats was here very erratic, to say the least; and Oxford steering wide to the right, into the Crab Tree bight, were caught and passed by Cambridge, and off the Soap-works were a quarter of a length to the bad. Here they came with a rush, and shot Hammersmith Bridge, a mile and three-quarters from the start, but a yard behind, and went in front off the Doves just beyond. It was still a close race to Chiswick Eyot, but Cambridge had so far held alongside of Oxford simply by dint of rowing three or four strokes more in the minute than the others; consequently they were the first to crack under the severity of the pace. Oxford, on the other hand, had a shot or two left in the locker, and forcing the pace with a quickened stroke as they passed the Eyot, came away from Cambridge, who were already extended to their utmost, and led by a clear length as they crossed to the Middlesex shore inorney Reach. Up the broad water to Barnes Bridge they improved their position, and had a good three lengths' lead as they shot the shore arch. From thence to the winning-post they had all their own way, and won by six lengths in 20 min. 20 sec. (not 20 min. 5 sec., as recorded by Benson's chronograph and other timekeepers, who probably took the win from the usual point of the 'Ship' instead of the flag-boat a hundred yards further on). But, be the

time what it may, it is at least the best on record of any that have been rowed in the flood-tide, and only surpassed by that of 1863, rowed on a strong ebb and with favouring breeze, in 23 min. 6 sec. from Barker's rails (5 miles), and 20 min. 5 sec. from the Ship to Putney; the last four miles and a quarter which forms the standard distance, the same as rowed this year.

But, after all, the time of a race rowed on a tideway is little or no criterion of a boat's capabilities, so seldom does any crew manage to secure a strong tide and smooth water at the right moment. An afternoon tide always runs stronger than a morning one, *i.e.*, those tides which fall later than two o'clock are nearer the 'spring' than those which are at their height before noon, and are 'neaps.' This year the tide was a fair one, but three or four days beyond the spring-tide (which had been on the Saturday), and thus, though better than some tides, still not one of the best. The race being usually a fixed date, Saturday week before Easter (which itself varies by the new moon), has generally fallen upon a thorough neap-tide: this year being on the Wednesday before the usual date it had rather a better stream. Moreover, many crews in former years—to wit, in '60, '65, '66, &c.—have been bullied by steamers overcrowding them, till the tide (a neap at the time) had spent and almost turned before a clear field had been secured for the start: and a crew is not worked up to complete concert pitch, to maintain full racing pace the whole way, till the last day or two of training; hence, at the time of spring-tide, a week before the race, they are rowing but half speed of stroke. Yet even these half-speed strokes, of about 34 and 35 a minute, have on spring-tides completely eclipsed racing records, and times varying from 20 min. 20 sec. to 19 min. 50 sec. have been accomplished on those terms in training, while 20 min. 20 sec. is the quickest record for a race. At the same time no disparagement is meant to the Oxonians of this year, who were, though rather rough in form, considerably above the ave-

rage in speed, and fit to be placed in the same class with the winning crews of '57, '63, and '66, which were no doubt the pick of those which have been brought out since the keelless boat has come into vogue.

Two points come into strong relief in contemplating the subject of University Races: one, the intense *furor* of the populace for the event, which can principally be attributed to the fact that this contest alone, of the leading items of sport in the season, is the one that cannot be 'squared' or bought at any price. A well-known turfite of large property and of the 'leg' class, whose horses run in and out on the turf in a manner explicable only to their owner, having lately lost a racing trial in a court of law, openly attributed his failure as he left the court to having recklessly neglected to 'square the — judge' before the cause came on. Such individuals fall into the natural yet very uncharitable error of estimating their neighbours' probity by the ratio of their own; yet the narrative serves to show the too general standard of morality among professional racing men, and at the same time the appreciation which the more fair-dealing public accord to a race which is beyond the influence and contamination of the 'legs.'

Last of all, the populace marvel and applaud the stubborn, bulldog pertinacity with which Cambridge year after year come up again to the scratch, saddened, no doubt, but unsubdued by the disaster. Characteristic though the whole race and its concomitants is from first to last of the English, and of no other

nation, yet this one feature is perhaps the most marked characteristic of all. In no other nation would such a trait be found, and, without disparaging other clubs, in hardly any other society even of England itself. An Anglo-Saxon never knows when he is beaten, and hence can never be finally crushed; the same spirit that made Oxford steal the race from the fire in '65, though three lengths behind at Hammersmith and virtually beaten by all precedents of boat-racing, urges Cambridge year after year to ignore all idea of inferiority and to throw down the gauntlet with new hopes and new pains in store. The tide must turn in time. Considering the extent to which Cambridge were handicapped by the inferiority of their river, their crew this year did them as much and more credit than did the Oxonian boat to the *Iais*. There is no school like adversity to those who know not to be crushed or cowed by it, and who, not scorning to take a leaf from their victors, do their best to repair year by year the weak point which caused their failure the year before. Cambridge will yet find a Zama to revenge Cannø and its preceding overthrows, and like her prototype

*'Per damna, per caedes, ab ipso*

*Ducit opes animunque ferro.*

*Meres profundo, pulchrior exiet,*

*Lactere, magno prorsus integrum*

*Cum laude victorem !*

And the ovation of that day will go far to atone for all the hardships and disappointments of a ten years' uphill struggle with luck, demoralization, and (pardon the bathos) the shortcomings of a navigable sewer!



## UNDER THE CHESTNUTS.

## I.

FALL the white blossoms, the soft turf is glowing,  
 Rustle the tender green fans in a row:  
 Under the chestnuts it seems to be snowing,  
 Whilst the grand leafy boughs away to and fro.

## II.

Glints on the mill-stream the silvering glory  
 Of the full tender-eyed Queen of the Night:  
 Telling to lovers the ever-same story,  
 Filling with dewdrops the lily-cups white.

## III.

Hushed are the moorlands; the nightingale keepeth  
 Vigil alone, as he plaintively sings;  
 Under the ferns every grey rabbit sleepeth,  
 Monarchs are peasants, and peasants are kings.

## IV.

Through the tall chestnuts the night breeze is straying,  
 Kissing their leaves and their pyramids white;  
 Through the tall chestnuts the zephyrs are playing,  
 Sporting like brownies and fays in the night.

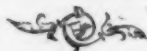
## V.

Under the chestnuts we wandered a-dreaming,  
 True friends, and lovers, in years long ago;  
 Back come those visions to-night, and, in seeming,  
 Boyhood has come again;—would it were so!

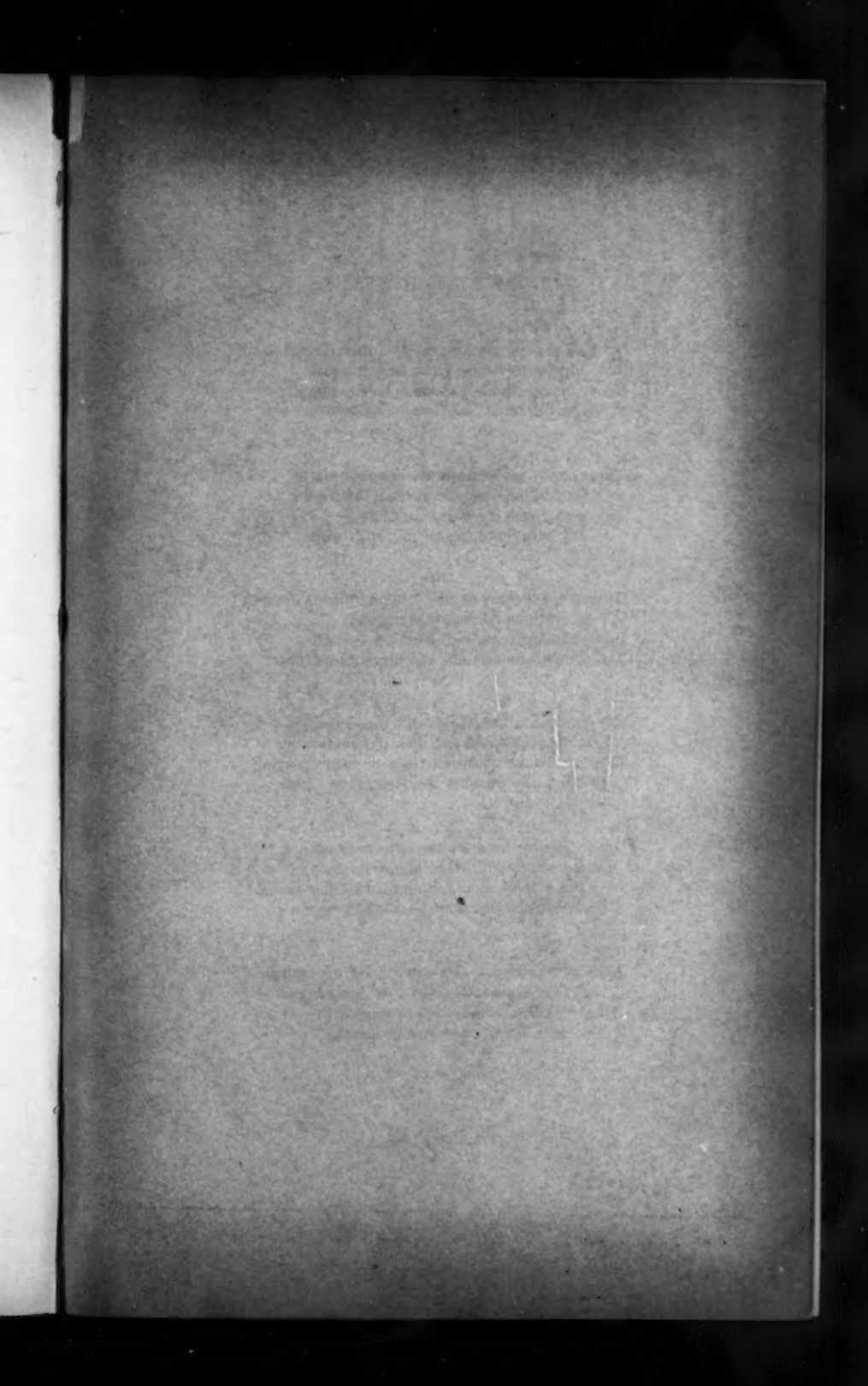
## VI.

And yet I know not—for why should we, weeping,  
 Sigh for the past, that can ne'er come again?  
 Better by far to let memory, sleeping,  
 Lie unawakened, nor murmur in vain!

A. H. B.









Drawn by Adelaide Claxton.]

THE LADY WITH THE LITTLE FEET.

[See the Story.

